When the Prussians Came to Poland

Laura de Turczynowicz

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The Author and her Children in America after their Escape from Poland

When the Prussians Came to Poland

The Experiences of an American Woman during the German Invasion

By

Laura de Gozdawa Turczynowicz

Illustrated

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To

MY SONS

WHEN THEY SHALL HAVE REACHED MANHOOD.

INTRODUCTION

I HAVE written our story because so many people have asked me to. Also, in the hope of helping Poland. She is worthy of help, martyred, devastated, trodden under the Prussian boot as she is!

The wife of a gallant Pole now serving humanity with the Russian Army as inspector-in-chief of the Sanitary Engineers, and the mother of two sons, to say nothing of a dear little daughter, I have the cause of Poland at heart! Much pressure has been brought to bear upon me, that I should advocate the sending of food into Poland. I cannot, in the light of my own experiences do so. Under the existing circumstances I know it would not be the Poles who would eat the bread sent them!

After the war is over, those still alive, the fittest who survive, will need quick and generous help from America—seeds to plant their fields, implements to use in cultivating them. Before the

war my husband worked so hard to help the peasants; to educate them, to teach them how to get the most out of their bits of land. How often I have driven with him away off to some tiny village, where the people would be gathered in the school, to hear how to plant their fields, their good kind faces weather-beaten, and showing the difficulty of their struggle with nature!

In Suwalki there was a Polish club, an agricultural society, with a fine building, where agricultural machines might be rented, or people helped in buying. Noble and peasant could borrow money to improve their land. How painful it was to see those machines dragged off to East Prussia, knowing the effort it had cost to get them!

Poland was in a wonderful state of evolution just before the war broke out. Surely it is only hindered, not stopped!

As a New York girl, I am afraid I knew very little about agriculture, but from the frequent journeys with my husband, and hearing his lectures as a Professor of the old Polish University in Cracow, I learned a little, and to love the peasants, as he did. It was a different life I

Madame Laura de Gozdawa Turczynowicz

(*née* Blackwell)

From a photograph by Newman, New York

stepped into after my marriage. I had left America like so many girls, to study and sing in Europe, but, after three years, work and play, married a Polish nobleman, and have never regretted it, for until the war separated us, not only by miles, but armies, I was happy as few women are. However, we have suffered—there must be an end! I have not looked Death in the eyes so often without learning to be patient, and wait.

LAURA DE GOZDAWA TURCZYNOWICZ.

NEW YORK, 1916.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
INTRODUCTION		v
CHAPTER		
I.	HOW THE WAR CAME TO US IN POLAND	1
II.	THE FIRST DAYS	11
III.	THE FIRST PATIENTS	18
IV.	AN AEROPLANE VISITS US—AND A CRIPPLED LAZARETTE	22
V.	UNREST	27
VI.	EVACUATION	32
VII.	THE FLIGHT	37
VIII.	JOURNEYING FARTHER	47
IX.	WARSAW	55
X.	WE ARRIVE IN RUSSIA	62
XI.	I SEE MY HOME ONCE MORE	65
XII.	THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY	76
XIII.	OFF TO GALICIA	80

CHAPTER PAGE

XIV.—Back to Suwalki . . . 89

XV.—The Germans Occupy Suwalki . 99

XVI.—The Occupation . . . 119

XVII.—Typhus! 135

XVIII.—The Children Recover . . 142

XIX.—The Prisoners 153

XX.—The Conditions among the Military Prisoners . . 164

XXI.—The Captain Returns . . 173

XXII.—The Lives of the Townspeople . 178

XXIII.—The Sale of Alcohol is once more Permitted . . . 185

XXIV.—In Trouble through the Children 190

XXV.—Whitsuntide 197

XXVI.—A New Petition . . . 204

XXVII.—A New Friend 210

XXVIII.—Prussian Justice . . . 216

XXIX.—Civil Government . . 222

XXX.—In the Russian Hospital . 228

XXXI.—The Prussian Treatment of their own 233

CHAPTER PAGE

XXXII.—After the Fall of Warsaw . 238

XXXIII.—Proclamations! 244

XXXIV.—Release! 252

XXXV.—The Journey 260

XXXVI.—Freedom! 271

ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

THE AUTHOR AND HER CHILDREN IN AMERICA AFTER THEIR ESCAPE FROM POLAND *Frontispiece*

MADAME LAURA DE GOZDAWA TURCZYNOWICZ (*née* BLACKWELL) vi
From a photograph, by Newman, New York.

A CORNER IN THE HOME GARDENS . . 2

STANISLAW DE GOZDAWA TURCZYNOWICZ . 30
The Husband of the Author.

BABY WANDA AND HER POLISH NURSES IN CRACOW COSTUME 56

THE AUTHOR IN RED CROSS UNIFORM . . 82

FACSIMILE OF RUSSIAN RED CROSS CERTIFICATE 84

A CURIOUS "SANITARY PASSPORT" ISSUED TO THE AUTHOR BY THE GERMANS . . 256

PAGE

FACSIMILE OF THE GERMAN PASSPORT ISSUED TO THE AUTHOR 262

STANISLAW DE GOZDAWA TURCZYNOWICZ . 278
Inspector-General of Sanitary Engineers.

When the Prussians Came to Poland

When the Prussians Came to Poland

CHAPTER I

HOW THE WAR CAME TO US IN POLAND

VERY near the borderline between Russia and Germany lies Suwalki. It was a delightful, old-fashioned spot full of homes, and with many estates in the neighbourhood. As one says in Polish, there were there very many of the "intelligence," meaning the noble class. People who were proud of the heirlooms, the old and valuable furniture, the beautiful pictures and books contained in their homes.

Into this old-world peace, came war, and of the homes and people, there is left only destruction and hopeless grey misery. How well I remember, and with what astonishment I think upon all that was before war was declared.

Is it possible that there in Poland peace once was? That one's home was one's own,—that no strange men came to peer into all one's belongings, and take what they could manage to carry away, destroying the rest? That, once upon a time, the people might smile? Say what they would, go out or stay at home as it pleased them to do? That there was no hunger,—that they might go into a shop and buy food for their little children with no possibility of refusal or being told that the goods so invitingly displayed were only for the military? That there should have been light and heat and medicine for the sick, and comfort for the dying? Was there such a time when the people dared to breathe and, with wonderful Slavic gaiety, throw off the troubles, which now seem nothing, and be happy? With eyes and heart full of war visions, it seems to me there never was a time when any one smiled in all that unhappy, martyred land.

For that summer of 1914, we had settled ourselves, after a short sojourn in Suwalki, following a winter in Nice, in a most delightful spot—a brand new villa on the edge of the great Augustowo

A Corner in the Home Gardens

Lakes in the heart of the wonderful forest. A more beautiful spot than it *was* would be hard to imagine. We were all tremendously happy, healthy, and free. The children were often all day long in the forest with their governess. There was a pony carriage for their especial use and a horse much addicted to sugar and possessed of very quiet nerves. In the wonderful white June nights, when the sun took a very short rest, the birds must really have been tired, they sang so the night long! We often went out on the waters in the middle of the night to be ready to greet the sun after his short retirement. All was peace and beauty! This quiet life, full of simple pleasure, lasted through the month of July, and on the second day of August we were expecting a large house party. My husband was not in the country with us, but in Suwalki for a few days, and I wondered why he did not come on the evening of the first of August. We waited dinner, and were sure he would be there, as he is a man who never disappoints. However, I waited in vain and felt the events of the future casting their shadows before them. Despite my later experiences with

bitter unhappiness I must say I was terribly unhappy that night. After being most wakeful, I fell, towards morning, into a very sound sleep, only to be awakened about four o'clock by a violent rapping on my window. I sprang up quickly in order to still the noise before the children should be aroused, thinking something was needed by the servant going into the town to the market. There I was confronted by Fate in the form of my husband's man, Jan, white and solemn-faced.

"My lady, there is war," and he handed me a card from my husband.

"War is declared. Come immediately with the children. Let the servants pack up what you wish to bring and come on later in the day."

To read this in the beauty of that summer morning and feel one's world crumble about one! Bidding the man wait, I hurriedly wrapped myself up and stole out of the house to arouse our people. The servants slept in quarters a little removed from the house, and I was forced to rap and call loudly before they could be aroused. Then they came,—first the cook—a noted person afterwards—

and the maids. They were sleepy and still engaged in completing their very simple toilets.

"The master has sent for us. We must go immediately to Suwalki. There is war with the Germans."

When I told them this, they stared at me, and as one, like a chorus, threw their aprons over their heads and began to howl, just as a dog keens and whimpers in the night when he is frightened,—the most horrible sound one could imagine, and which almost made me lose my scarcely retained self-possession. I was forced to threaten them with all sorts of punishment before they could be made to stop that blood-curdling noise! Then, saying that they were to prepare breakfast, so that we could leave the minute the children were ready, I went over the hill towards the forester's. I can never forget that walk in the early stillness, through those woods and fields, which were so soon to be literally wet with blood! I remember, just as we reached the crest of the hill, turning to ask a question of Jan—just to hear my own voice, the future began to look so very black. I found poor Jan was gallantly striving to keep

the tears back. When the poor fellow had pulled himself together enough to speak, he told me that he was called, and must be back and ready to march at twelve o'clock. The mobilization had begun! The poor boy was sure he was going to his death, and said he "would never again be seen by his lady!" but he was, for, as Fate would have it, two months afterwards I closed his eyes in the hospital. Shot to pieces almost, death was a merciful relief!

We reached the house of the forester, Majewski, and here also had great difficulty in making them hear us. Finally the forester, his wife, and children tumbled out, with eyes full of sleep, and of course dressing themselves on the way! When I told the forester what the master had written, he said:

"Oh, the master is over-anxious! There is no war! Let my lady permit me to go to Suwalki to see what the trouble is, and let my lady rest quietly here! If there were war, my three strong sons and good horses would be called out!"

After telling him to do as he was bid, instead of advancing ideas of his own, I left him under

orders to bring his horses and wagon, and to get some of the adjoining peasants and their wagons also. Almost running on my way back I was greeted from a distance by an uproar! My children were crying from the discomfort of being awakened so early, and had raised their voices in protest at the general state of disorder.

These three were Wanda, six years, and Stanislaw and Wladislaw, twin boys, five years! I think they were also protesting that no one was paying the slightest attention to them, and that was a state of affairs to which they were not used!

I found the dining-room in a most curious state. The things which were absolutely necessary to serve breakfast were being already packed, necessitating the unpacking. My governess, Panna Jadwiga, was the only help I had, trying valiantly to help me quell the miniature riot! When we had given the children something to eat, and were quite ready, I found there was a strike! The servants refused to remain behind without me, wishing to let everything go and get to the town. They might as well have done so for of all the silver, rugs, and furniture, there is no vestige

remaining! However, not yet understanding what war means, I stopped and struggled with them until things were fairly well packed. I was obliged to drive them for they were quite mad with fear of what would befall them—stumbling over each other as if blind, and constantly looking over their shoulders to see if a German were not ready to seize them! At eleven I gave up and said the children could not be kept about any longer, and I was so sorry for my husband waiting all this time; feeling also the need of hearing his voice. So, stowing the children away in their own carriage, which they were using for the last time, their governess, to say nothing of Dash, the white Spitz dog, and myself, who had also to be the coachman, we started, leaving the peasants still weeping and wrangling, to follow or stop as they would.

I found even the quiet nerves of the horse had been affected!—perhaps because no one had thought to give him sugar, and he was a pampered animal. Whatever the cause, he shied continuously the whole way through the forest. I was so nervous every sound made me jump. Very soon we came across many sad groups. Women escorting their

men to the mobilization centres. . . . Misery had already come to dwell in Poland! The men had at least some excitement, but oh—be sorry for the women—the poor left-at-home women, with the drudgery and the grey anxiety,—and the waiting—waiting—always waiting.

We met many loads of people already hurrying to the town. In fact, our dog Dash had a brisk exchange of hostilities with a pig tied on behind one load of household goods, surmounted by the family. I know Dash returned in a filthy state, expressing a lively satisfaction with the encounter.

After leaving the woods, we were overtaken by a terrific storm right in the middle of the open fields surrounding Suwalki. Panna Jadwiga took all three children in her arms, and we covered them as best we could. The umbrella was on hand, but in such a storm of little avail. The summer air had changed into a wintry one, the sleet blinding both me and the poor horse. In the few minutes it lasted the road was transformed into a torrent, and if the road were remarkable at the best of times, what was it after such a deluge? Horse and driver clung bravely together, and finally

were able to open their eyes. A few minutes after, in the midst of sunshine, but oozing water from every stitch of clothing, from hair and hat, we drove through the town. At any other time such a dramatic entry would have aroused much comment,—but when war has been declared, it takes more than a few wet people to make other people stare.

After arriving at our home, our man Jacob took the horse, and it was the last time we saw him. The faithful creature—I have always regretted not giving him one parting lump of sugar.

My husband was in a very nervous state, not knowing why he had been disobeyed. The master's word is law in Poland. But, knowing the peasants, he understood the impossibility of doing anything else, and leaving the children sitting up in bed drinking hot milk, we started for the hotel to see if we could not get something to eat, neither of us having tasted food that day. We found every place crowded. No one wanted to stay home, —the Demon of Unrest had entered every breast. Such was our first day of the war!

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST DAYS

THE first few days after war was declared were full of interesting events. The most notable was the wonderful change of popular feeling. Before the war there were many misunderstandings, to put it mildly! The two peoples, Russians and Poles, divided by every sentiment, tradition, and by religion (the Poles are Roman Catholic, the Russians Greek Catholic), are so nearly related that, like members of a family, when a quarrel arises between them they become the bitterest of enemies! All these differences were put aside, and a real brotherhood sprang into existence. How astonishing and how delightful it was to see them united, all expressing the same sentiment! To me it came as a great surprise—being born in America, and a Slav by marriage. Such a revolution to take place in one day—surely only the

Slavic people could accomplish it! All were glad, and felt good would come to Poland.

The third day we were much occupied organizing the Polish Red Cross for those two governments, Suwalki and Lomza. My husband was President, and his position was not an enviable one. The difficulties of getting Polish people to work together are almost insurmountable, owing perhaps to their unfortunate national history. However, we finally got our committee together, and made steps towards getting a hospital open. I remember one thing especially. Towards evening the disturbing rumour circulated that there was to be no war! The maddest excitement prevailed. Not only the upper classes, but the peasants stood about discussing it—fearing they should be disappointed. I also know the suggestion was seriously discussed of sending an expression of devotion and fealty to Petrograd! It was understood that the delay had been caused by uncertainty as to the intentions of England. If his Imperial Majesty, the Czar, received no message from that corner of his domain, expressing the hope that even if England did not go to war, Russia would,

the reason was that the rumour proved unfounded. War had come.

The first sound of marching troops came Sunday, one week after the first news. About four o'clock in the morning we were awakened by the marching of men—great masses of men on the move. Of course the whole town was alive in no time. The soldiers were tired and hungry from their long journey afoot,—most of them had come from Minsk and were hungry. Food and comforts were simply showered upon them by the townspeople, rich and poor. It was a relief to have something to do. We invited the officers as they came along to breakfast, and had a cauldron of soup and heaps of bread in the courtyard for the soldiers. So great was the fervour of helping that every few steps along the roadside someone stood handing things out. I remember one soldier wanted a drink of water, and two small boys in their zeal to get there first got into a fight, in which their families also joined. That day there was still laughter along with the tears. We entertained the sappers that night because they only went on the next day to East Prussia. The

captain was a Pole, a friend of my husband's. After this first break for the front, men were simply poured into East Prussia. The wagons made one great roar—night and day.

In the town were also various changes. With few exceptions all the Russian families decided to go to Russia. Trains were set aside for this purpose, and at the stations many sad and many very amusing things occurred. It was sad for these people to leave their homes and all their belongings, to see their husbands and sons marching off to war, not even to have the comfort of stopping there a little nearer to them. Many ladies started out with two or three soldiers carrying their pet possessions—even some pieces of furniture, samovars—dogs of course were many. All had to be left at the station, and happy the woman who found a seat for herself in those awful trains packed with people as sardines are packed in a tin. One officer's wife told me afterwards that for a day and a half she did not sit down, and finally, from fatigue, slept standing! Ah, yes! War is neither a comfortable nor a pleasant experience.

I think it was about a week after the first news when the Ukase of the Czar was published—that all spirits were to be destroyed, and the use of alcohol forbidden. What excitement prevailed over this announcement in a country where at dinner one must reckon at least one bottle of wodka for each guest! Such strong stuff was it that the only time I ever tried it I thought my last moment had come! The day before the official destruction was to take place we went to get alcohol for the hospital—both the pure, and the coloured for burning in lamps, etc. There were tremendous crowds about, all struggling to get a last bottle to drink, already drunken—without shame, and horrid! I thought then what a wonderful thing the Czar had done for humanity. How brave it was deliberately to destroy a tremendous source of income in order to help his people! We were forced to have police protection to bring the bottles home. Such bottles! Each one holding twelve quarts!

The next day we saw the destruction of the "Monopol." The chief of police ordered all spirits carried to the top of a hill in the outskirts of

Suwalki—then with much ceremony the bottles were smashed, letting the fiery stuff flow in streams! What cries there were from the people—the peasants threw themselves down on the ground, lapped the wodka with their tongues, and when they could swallow no more they rolled over and over in it! After a while my husband thought it better to leave; even in an automobile there was little safety among such mad creatures. We were very glad when "King Alcohol" had been vanquished, and we shuddered to think what would have been if such an orgy had taken place without police to quell it!

That same evening, a friend of ours was called to the colours. He was glad to go,—the more so that his wife was a German! He gave me letters for his wife should he not return. I remember his eyes, full of premonitions, yet glowing with a desire to meet the time-old enemy of the Poles! He never returned; if taken a prisoner, it is all over long ago. We sent the letters to his wife who was with friends in the depths of Russia.

How the different people we knew and were

near to come before my eyes. All, all gone. All those homes swept away,—out of existence, but "God lives"! It cannot be all in vain, the blood-shed and sorrow!

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST PATIENTS

Our hospital was quickly arranged. We had accommodations at a pinch for two hundred and fifty. There was a wonderful and generous response from the people—linen, bedding, beds, food all poured in. These were curious days. Life was full of excitement. It was as if we expected something to happen, and we waited—everyone nervous, excited, keyed up! My hands were more than full. Knowing how to sew, and not knowing any other lady who did, I was forced to take charge of the work rooms until the linen closet was ready for use. There had been absolutely no preparation of any description! We had to begin from the first. Except for the constant stream of forage wagons, and occasional regiments, life began to be rather quiet,—to take on a certain

routine. We constantly increased our supplies. The possibility of foodstuffs getting dear and scarce was, of course, to be taken into consideration; but no one dreamed of such a thing as the enemy getting them. Our army had pushed on so valiantly.

Time dragged in those days of preparation. One always thought and wondered what would come next. It was like walking in the dark and expecting to fall into the sea. But one night about twelve o'clock, the first loads of wounded came to Suwalki. The nights are always cold there, and sounds carry startlingly. We heard the cars stop,—motor trucks packed full of groaning, coughing humanity! They had been transported a long distance, and were on the verge of exhaustion. In such numbers were they we were forced to have food cooked in our own kitchens to help out. The next day we had over five hundred in our hospital! The base hospitals were filled, and then emptied into hospitals like ours.

In the next few days, the Russian Red Cross came also, and even they ran out of things! I know my workshop was put into use making

shirts, etc., for them. It was a delight to do such work; and what a pleasure it was when the director gave me fifty roubles to pay the sewing women, who were in need. We had a fund started to aid the women. Those who could sew were already employed. The real work came at this time. One wished to comfort all those poor fellows. How sad we felt that we had not enough beds to go around. Still there was plenty of good clean straw.

In the hospitals the floors were full. One had to step carefully; I began to get acquainted with the Russian soldiers. What splendid fellows they are—such a childlike simplicity of nature, such bravery and devotion. They always seemed to understand my remarkable Russian; I had just begun to learn to speak it.

One room in the hospital we gave over to Germans who had been taken prisoners. They were treated with the greatest consideration, and had just the same fare as the others. I remember one day walking through the ward speaking to the different ones. A young boy asked me when the Russians would begin to torture him! I asked

where he got such an idea, and he replied that they had been told in Germany what would happen if they ever got caught—that they had been preparing for the worst ever since taken—that they thought we were feeding them up to make them suffer more! When it was explained to them how everyone was full of the best and kindest intentions, the faces brightened and one or two who had refused to speak began to ask questions, and feel that life was not quite ended for them.

Suwalki grew very busy as the days went by—wounded coming and going—being transported after a few days' care in our hospitals first to Wilno, and then on to Moscow.

CHAPTER IV

AN AEROPLANE VISITS US—AND A CRIPPLED LAZARETTE

ONE afternoon my husband and I, after some hard work in the hospital, were drinking tea in a *cukiernia*—when an aeroplane bombarded the town! Ah! That is the time each seeks what is nearest to his heart! There was a wild fusillade of bullets—even the men in the town taking a shot—firing madly; but the aeroplane got off—free—after dropping a number of bombs and doing astonishingly little damage. One bomb struck the Boys' Trade School—fatally injuring the little four-year-old son of the caretaker.

On the 28th day of August—my birthday—a Russian Sister came to me to see if we could help their hospital—a field lazarette, with about one hundred and fifty beds. They had been turned

back from the front and could not get supplies. There were three doctors, four nurses, and various orderlies—quartered in one of the barracks—with almost seven hundred wounded! Of course the staff were exhausted, and no supplies! What could four nurses do with such a mass of humanity? I went there with some of my people to see what could be done to help out. The memory of that place will always remain, for there, for the first time, I came face to face with awful suffering. At the very door one heard the low murmur of misery; one room after another packed with men, who could not be helped. There were no medicines—no disinfectants—no linen. In one corner were some prisoners. The sister (nurse) on duty asked me to go to them because I spoke German. One poor fellow, turning restlessly from side to side—calling ceaselessly for water—was quieted when I spoke to him, asking what he wanted. He begged for a drink, and that I should write to his wife, as he felt death upon him. While I was doing what was possible to help him, the poor fellow began to talk. He told me that he had been a bookkeeper, that he was twenty-six years

old, and had a wife and children, a little house of his own, had never harmed any one in his life, took no interest in anything outside of his work and family, until with three hours' notice he was ordered to join his regiment, and leave it all.

"The great lords have quarrelled and we must pay for it with our blood, our wives, and children." This man was transported that same day, and died on the way to the station.

So hopeless it was trying to help until there was something to help with, that I drove back to the city to see different people, and in a short time had gathered more than a thousand roubles with which to replenish the lazarette — bandages, cotton-wool, sublimate, plaster, asperine, iodine, etc., and a great share of our spiritus. It was pitiful to see how the sisters rejoiced to get the things!

In my own hospital there was great dissatisfaction because so much was given to someone else. I had a battle royal over the linen I insisted on giving, but my husband was on my side and we gave all that was absolutely necessary to the

lazarette, and afterwards regretted that it was not more, for the Germans got all that linen and our supplies! I remember the gentlemen still played cards then—and to my fund for the lazarette went all the money won.

In that lazarette for the first and only time I had to give up and go away for a moment to keep from fainting—for on a cot I saw what appeared to be a ball of cotton and bandages—with three black holes, just as if a child had drawn mouth and nose and eyes—and the flies! . . . It was a shock to hear a voice with a cultured accent coming from such an object—a Polish voice begging whoever it was not to go away, but to give him water; his hands were burned to a crisp, he could not move, and the flies! . . . The odour from the gangrene was so awful that I was overpowered for a time—but, afterwards, sent my maid home for netting, as much as she could find; and then helped the sister in charge to rebandage and veil that remnant of a man. He had been near a bursting shell—and lain four days in the field after he was wounded. He asked if his eyes were burned away.

"Yes—quite gone." If he would live or die?—

"Die."

"God has not forgotten me—but please, then, let me drink—drink."

CHAPTER V

UNREST

After this lazarette had been helped out for a few days, they again received supplies, and could work on; but those patients were moved and no more came—not more than a dozen or two. No one knew what was the trouble as the days went on. Rumours there were, of course. How curious those war rumours are—one hears the most absurd things — some always give them credence.

We heard once that Königsberg was taken, that the army was pushing on to Berlin,—we all hoped so! Once, when I was at the station with the wounded, a regiment of Cossacks arrived—coming from the far corner of Russia—wild, fierce-looking men, with one object in life. I noticed that an officer who spoke to the men laughed very heartily and I asked him what had happened.

"The Cossacks wish to know if it is already Berlin, and if they may let loose!"

As the days went by a curious tension made itself felt; one started to do something, and did not finish. The hospitals were quite empty, occasionally bands of prisoners were marched through, forage wagons went continually. One day a lot of prize pigs from Kaiser Wilhelm's estate near the border were driven into our town —some of the soldiers occasionally brought back loot in the wagons they drove; that was forbidden, however, and the Chief of Police, who had turned into a real friend of the townspeople, took away and locked up all such stolen goods.

Aeroplanes with bombs and literature dropping from them were daily events—what promises made to army and people—promises of autonomy almost identical with those made by Russia to the Poles, which the people had taken in good faith.

When an aeroplane came everyone ran for shelter, but there was not the excitement of the first instance—we had grown used to them!

On the 8th of September, we noticed laden forage wagons leaving Suwalki, and another line

of laden wagons returning to Suwalki. Also, the Red Cross was ordered to pack up; but there was absolutely no news from the front.

On the 9th, my husband went to Warsaw, most unwillingly, for the meeting of the Polish Red Cross Central Committee. We felt the moment to be a dangerous one to leave me alone with the children, but it was absolutely necessary for him to go for two days. Having been born in America we felt that if need be, I could take care of myself and the children.

All that 10th day of September there was unrest. Aeroplanes, forage-wagons going and returning! I went into the cellars and attics to conceal stores, etc. In the attic I was frightened by the echoes —like thousands of feet tramping—tramping— until the maids began to cross themselves and say the place was haunted. Perhaps it was!

That night, beside my babies' bedsides I prayed as I had never prayed before; dear little ones— they were only interested in all the happenings! About nine o'clock, the streets were filled with a mob of people fleeing from the outlying villages—men, women, children, dogs, cows, pigs,

horses, and carts all mixed up in one grand *mélange*—and we heard the snap, snap of rifle shots. A Russian officer whom I knew came to ask that all our lights be extinguished—even that in the night nursery. He said no one knew what it was—whether the Germans had broken through or if the Cossacks were hunting down an officer, who was reported as basely betraying his men—a German of course—as many of the officers then were! This Russian officer had known my husband was in Warsaw, and he took us under his especial protection.

Our house, a great, big old place overlooked the road to East Prussia. The way was almost clear from the windows at the back of the house. It was such an endless sort of a place—I felt so lonesome wandering about that night—not lonesome because I was alone—oh no! everybody in the house seemed to move whenever I did, except the children—but, I *did* want my husband! It was so awful to hear all those noises and not go to see what they were about; such a pandemonium of sound—and no moon to help things out! When I once looked out of the window at the back of

Stanislaw de Gozdawa Turczynowicz

The Husband of the Author

the house (the Poles called it a palace!) innumerable lights were flashing about the fields and shots and cries. Finally growing so nervous with the sounds, the uncertainty, and also hearing people about me say their prayers as if they expected to die the next moment, I lighted a candle and stole about the rooms looking at them—saying good-bye to the old order of things! I also felt it was time to take, from its hiding place in the bottom of a small upright piano in my boudoir, the money my husband had left. For some reason the darkness, the secrecy, made me feel just like a thief—and I jumped up, scattering gold pieces all over the floor, when my good cook came with a black-coffee tray. She had not forgotten me in the midst of all her fear.

The money was a problem to hide—five thousand roubles—gold, silver, and bills. By the time it was all concealed about me I felt rather unbalanced—five hundred roubles in five and ten rouble pieces, gold, and three hundred in small silver pieces is a weight! So many bills are also inconvenient, but—how much worse to have no money—and how many there were in this predicament.

CHAPTER VI

EVACUATION

MORNING, the 11th of September, dawned at last—and the streets so empty as if no one lived! Except, of course, forage-wagons! But they were part of the street like lamp posts! The mob had flown farther.

About six o'clock the wounded began to pour into the town—never have I seen worse cases—hands and arms gone—blinded—all the sad story of war. By eleven o'clock we had one hundred and twenty-seven wounded and numbers of those who had also lost a hand or arm. Bad news also came—our army was in retreat, but still no orders to evacuate! I talked with the commander of the city—with several men in authority. They decided I should leave that night,—and my word was given—though against my will, because my husband was to come the next day, and I had the

feeling that the Germans would not dare come in his absence. But I did try to send a telegram, only to find the wires cut! The little city, full of life, and homes, and wounded—cut off from the world! Hurrying home I found my children playing quietly with their governess, Panna Jadwiga—the sewing-women working—at least making a pretence of it. It was so lonesome! I took the children to the dining-room to lunch with me. How pretty it looked, the curious old room with steps leading down to its great windows, the soft colours of the rugs, the table with its fine napery and pretty silver and glass. We sat down, and I was just telling Panna Jadwiga about the great number of new patients in our hospital, when a fusillade of rifle-shots sounded as if in the very room, followed by the boom, boom of cannon! We sat speechless a second, my little girl began to cry, the serving-man let a tray with soup fall on the floor, crash!—but no one paid any attention. I only told him to get a carriage for me, that in fifteen minutes we must be out of the house; the cook was told to pack some food, Panna Jadwiga was to take the children in her care, a nurse maid

was to pack necessaries, and I wished to get some valuables together; my money I already carried, a little case of jewels was there to my hand, but it seemed as if all the poor of Suwalki came crying to me, as if I could help them! The poor things! I gave them each a three rouble bill, having a large packet stuck in my blouse; money had absolutely no value at that moment; trying to collect my thoughts, their screaming and the ever increasing sound of battle making it difficult.

I paid no attention to what was scrambled together, except that on my bed laid a number of pale-coloured silk stockings, pink, blue, green, violet—ready for packing—and my sewing bag. I picked up those articles and hung on to them as if they were priceless treasures, waving the stockings about like a flag—and no one was astonished! The man Jacob came to say he could not get anything but two peasants' wagons. Off we started leaving a trail of our most valued possessions behind us.

Oh, what a street! The forage-wagons now all going one way, bringing their loads back, each having four soldiers with cocked guns! Wagons full of

people. My acquaintances standing up screaming, paying no attention one to the other, one solid mass of disorder—primeval man and woman put to flight by an inexorable force—all conventions dropped as if they never existed—leaving all behind them, taking useless things but forgetting a change of linen. I remember seeing one old woman with a feather bed on her head, dragging a samovar by the handle, bumpety bump, over the cobble-stones. A crowd of people were waiting for me to come out, begging me not to leave, to let them come with me.

Just at that time came the order to evacuate the town. I had sent word I would help them with the wounded at the station, but now I had to care for my children. Then, after Jacob had kissed the cross, promising to care for our property as well as he could, we all climbed into those wagons —a difficult business,—the top, a sort of a rack to carry hay or straw, spreading out in a most uncomfortable fashion.

I gave just one glance back at our dear old happy home—a look to see if we were taking anything—seeing the second wagon packed with

luggage—mostly the servants'—and Dash barking wildly on top. I had my three children, their governess, two maids, the cook, of my family, and a young girl, Miss Gabryella, who was all alone. She also had her maid. We were just starting, when a priest, the family friend, came rushing up. We looked at each other without a greeting, and I asked, "Right or wrong?" He threw up his hands. "As God lives—I do not know!—but—go—" Lifting his hand in the sign of blessing he told the men to drive on—into that vortex of humanity—people running—laden like horses—getting tired of the weight,—dropping it—but going on! Half-way along a man, an acquaintance of ours, laid violent hands on the peasant who drove the luggage wagon, turned him about, and went off with dog and all. This from a most polished gentleman in times of peace!

CHAPTER VII

THE FLIGHT

FINALLY, fighting our way through, we got to the station. I found we also had some luggage —we had been sitting upon it. The cook had brought an enormous bag of what the Poles call toast—slices of bread toasted on both sides, a ham, still hot, with little rivers of gravy trickling from it, some sardines, some sugar, and lemons.

The wagon was immediately taken from us, and we started out to find the Red Cross train, picking up on the way a lady with her two sons, one of whom was just recovering from a severe illness and was hardly able to move.

It is a memory—the coming to a station where no one knew if the trains could go or not. We walked or rather stumbled along, the children talking excitedly about going in a train with the soldiers, the servants dragging through the dust

and over the tracks what luggage our *friend* had not run off with! Finally, I came across the director of the lazarette we had helped—"cast your bread upon the waters," and he helped us —saying he was happy to pay a little of the debt the lazarette owed me.

We found our train—a cattle train, with evidences of its former occupants! There were already a few wounded, but we managed, with the aid of an old coat and a pail of water, to make one car more habitable. The work also made the maids stop the awful noise they had kept up continually. Presently the wounded came—many of them not bandaged—and thirty-two of the especially bad cases, were allotted to my car. One, who had lost his hand, had no covering on the raw stump. He had just been prepared for the doctor when all were turned out of the hospital. These poor fellows took my mind off my own troubles—the worst news they had was that the Germans had captured the railroad to Warsaw! A picture of my husband being caught flashed through my mind!

I found, of course, that I had no cotton or

bandages—but I was able to get a small supply of such things from the Director. It was a pitiful picture which my little children saw—the poor man, who had lost his hand suffering agonies from the contact of the air with the raw flesh. How it hurt, and how patient the man was—the big tears just rolling down his cheeks! I couldn't keep the children away—there was no place to send them. It was sweet to see how they tried to comfort the big soldier,—little Wanda drying his eyes, the boys holding his hand. It was a help to the man—if a sad one—he had children of his own somewhere. After doing what I could to bring a tiny bit of comfort into the circumstances, I wished to go to the other cars, but found that the doctors and nurses had arrived, and that it was not necessary,—besides we were forbidden to leave the car. Three more people attached themselves to me, and we made room for them.

At five o'clock—always the same—the confusion increasing as the firing grew nearer. The train was ready for instant flight, steam up, and all aboard, but we waited in hopes the enemy would be driven off. The confusion was so great

that it seemed a miracle when an orderly brought a portion of condensed milk to each of the wounded, but just then no one wished for food! As time went on, the fear died down a bit, and dissatisfaction grew. Three of the people left to find more convenient quarters—my cook went into hysterics, —Miss Gabryella cried, thinking it would be better at home. Everyone seemed to feel that I was the one responsible for all the discomfort. After listening some time to their complaints, I asked two soldiers slightly wounded to help me get out of the car, bag and baggage. The wounded raised their voices in protest, "Little Sister, do not leave us," but I went; making all of our party leave the car. Then, on the ground, I asked them what it was they wished to do, "Go or stay?'

"Let us go, let us go—the train will start without us."

And upon my again asking them if they knew quite well what they were about, and were willing to do as I should decide, they cried, "Yes, yes." So, telling them that must be the last of all complaints and indecision, that I had nerves, and greater responsibilities than they had, we climbed

back into the car, and the rest of the journey's discomforts were received in silence.

The hours dragged by—it grew dark; always the sound of battle grew nearer. I gave the children, for the first time, ham—and that hard toast—suffering to see them, realizing they had no place to sleep, and that I was without a home!

The delicacy of those soldiers! They were in pain—wounded and weak, but they helped by every thought and look. They gave up their coats, and begged to hold the children, who would have nothing to do with the servants—they wanted the soldiers! If a battle raged around us, in that car with its strange assortment of human beings there was love and harmony. After awhile the children wanted the soldiers to sing. They began one of those weird minor melodies, singing, softly, softly. I could not bear it. The flood gates opened. The singing was rudely enough interrupted by the sounds of shots much nearer to us. The Germans had stolen a march and got around to the other side!

The main body of troops were about five miles the opposite side of Suwalki, just beyond our

home. That was an anxious moment. We were warned by the officer in charge to be perfectly quiet—that the train was at last to go—running the gauntlet.

At the very last moment two freshly wounded men were shoved into our car—both bleeding, and one, a young Cossack, unconscious.

The car began to move—stealing through the night—one benefit from the danger—every person had to be quiet. In a few minutes we were right where the shots were flying; some of them struck our car! The bullets sang but they could not reach us—we were watched over. On through those bullets we went, and when the danger was past, I saw it was half-past eleven. We had been a little more than half an hour on the road. All danger was not over, but at least the bullets did not whizz about our ears. The babies were asleep, with the soldiers' arms about them—it made my heart ache to see those men—their tenderness and touching anxiety to do something.

Now it was safe to light a candle to attend the newly wounded. The Cossack was very bad—shot through the hip—and then no chance of

getting the doctor until we reached Vilno. Fortunately, he was still unconscious, but had a certain blue look that made me fear there was no real help for him. It was such a frightful wound, that all the cotton and bandages I had were hardly enough to staunch it—but the blood stopped flowing.

The other man—a tremendous, black-bearded creature, was wounded in the breast, and his clothing was absolutely torn to rags. A gaping wound with no shot in it—but—! There remained only a small piece of gauze and a little cotton. In a flash of inspiration I knew why I had hung on to those silk stockings of mine, and the sewing bag. Those stockings made a very passable bandage, and a cheerful looking one when finished. Fancy sewing a bandage from your own stockings by the light of a candle held by a soldier, himself wounded—in a cattle car—speeding through the night, not knowing what would happen the next moment!

It grew very cold. The worst cases suffered exceedingly from the jolting of the train. At another time, the fact that the poor young Cossack

did not regain consciousness would have filled me with anxiety, but now I was glad of it—at least the movement of the train made his suffering no worse.

The man with the gay bandages slept almost as soon as his wound was dressed. The others slept or at least were quiet. When I dampened the dressing on the stump of arm, I found that from the contact with the air, dust, etc., and in spite of iodine, the man began to grow feverish, and to murmur incessantly. There was no help for him—nothing I could do. One of the soldiers begged me to sit down and rest, and there they had made a bed for me of their coats right by the door; the corners were all occupied. Finally, to please them, I laid down saying, "Now I lay me down to sleep," even as the children had done. Watching the little things sleep in the soldiers' arms I too fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

Awakening with a start, every bone aching from fatigue and the hardness of my bed, I found it was after five o'clock. The children still slept but the soldiers said "Good-morning" softly, and

that the "Little Sister" must think she was quite alone. Could men be more thoughtful?

I arranged my hair as best I could—one of the soldiers had a small looking-glass,—and poured water over my hands. Then I climbed over to see my Cossack. He "slept"—and needed no care of mine. It was only necessary to cover his face—such a boyish blond face—how good he suffered no more. There are worse things than death. All the others were fairly well—only the one with the hand was delirious. He needed quick help—there would have to be another amputation—no help for him until Vilno. The others were hungry, but too polite to tell me so.

The children woke up—gay as larks. The train stopped for a few minutes, and those who could walk got out; I bought a bag of apples. When we were once more under way, I began to carve ham, and gave out toast. Everyone ate as if it were quite a normal thing to live so,—with a dead man lying at your elbow! Ham, toast, and apples were soon finished—but then nothing to drink.

The children had to be amused—even though

they were quiet when we told them the Cossack was asleep—with little stories for them. Eight o'clock came and we stopped at Olita. Taking two soldiers and our water bucket (it had been used to water the horses) I went to the restaurant. Everyone there wished to know all the news—consternation! Many people were on their way to Suwalki from Warsaw.

The proprietor asked what we needed.

"Tea and bread."

He emptied two samovars into the bucket, made it sweet, put lemons in, and had his people carry this ambrosia out to the train, while the soldiers carried rolls—just as many as he had—a great quantity—enough for our party—and would take no money for it!

"The lady helps—may not I? We shall need help ourselves perhaps—God will remember."

Astonishing it was how those things disappeared; then the time dragged as we travelled through that lovely September morning, everything seeming so quiet after our experiences. It was like a dream—one was dulled.

We reached Vilno at one o'clock.

CHAPTER VIII

JOURNEYING FARTHER

VILNO station was quiet and orderly, only the soldiers, being shipped to other points, and the many Red Cross trains, spoke of war-times.

We were the first refugees and were instantly surrounded by people anxious to know what had happened. Ladies carrying tea, sandwiches, etc., to the wounded, wanted to help with the children, but of course it was not necessary. Besides—what in a child's eyes is a mere woman in comparison with a soldier? I made my report to the doctor of the night and the Cossack's death. This responsibility removed, I was free to do for my babies. They were happy enough—the centre of an admiring crowd. It was very difficult to say good-bye to the men who had shown such consideration during that eventful train ride. They kissed my hands—I wished them God speed from

my heart, and the first stage of our journey was over.

We started on to find a *doroszka* (cab). A lady of the Red Cross helpers had told me which hotel would be best for us. I was giving a coin to a soldier for carrying some pieces of our luggage, when another one almost knocked him down, crying:

"Good-for-nothing! To take money from the Sister who has brought our comrades to Vilno!"

After a drive through that dear old romantic town, we came to the hotel—the best there. It might have been improved upon, but, after a night in a cattle train, it was delightful. Hot every place, we could not get comfortable nor adjust our ideas. I secured two bedrooms and a sitting-room. There was one bath for the entire hotel! We washed and had dinner. The children were restless and cross, continually asking where the soldiers were. Immediately after eating something, I started back to the station with Miss Gabryella. We were so tired, so hot. The people on the streets looked careless and happy, dressed in fresh, cool clothing. I grew quite resentful

for awhile, the clothes of the ladies seemed to be the last straw. I wondered what was happening to mine. It really appeared to me a crime for people to go about as if nothing were the matter, when all my gods had fallen and were being trampled in the dust. I remember that state of mind during the drive back to the station, never having felt that way before, nor after. I was so worried as to be almost hysterical and felt if no news came from my husband I should surely not be able to endure the strain. Of course the danger was past, therefore I had nothing to keep me up to the mark.

At the station were crowds of Suwalki people. One man of our acquaintance had brought with him only his walking stick! Another man had become separated from his young son, fourteen, and daughter, sixteen, on the station in Suwalki, —the train suddenly starting while they were fetching something,—and the poor father was on the verge of losing his reason, telling everybody over and over the story of his loss.

Well, my jewels of price, my babies, were safe! I sent a long telegram to Warsaw, telling, as

plainly as was permitted, what had happened, and decided to return to the children, but not before lending, or rather giving, money to a number of people.

The station was like a club; Suwalki had taken possession of it. The money I had carried seemed as if it were not my own, but given to help others.

Oh, the wretchedness of that first day! Such a lot of people came for help that my money melted like snow in the sunshine. I took just as many as could be packed in our rooms, keeping only one room for the children. The servants slept in the laundry, one of them talking so loudly as to disturb everyone. It was necessary to call from the window, "A good girl says her prayers and goes to bed!" forgetting the poor thing had no bed!

What a sight met my eyes when I glanced into the rooms where my "guests" were. Tired out, sad, and troubled, even in sleep, they lay about on the floor, on chairs put together, or twisted up on the little settees, all people of consequence before life had been turned upside down.

The next day dragged wearily along, everybody

waiting, living only to hear better news. The city was rapidly filling with refugees. In one place, an old convent, they were given a roof to sleep under, and hot tea. Townspeople were already carrying bread.

A beautiful spot in Vilno was an out-of-door church. An archway is built over one of the principle streets, a much revered picture of the Madonna and child was unveiled, and there were never ceasing services. A sight it is to see all—coachmen, workmen, servants, and the gentle class, all mixed up, praying in the street, kneeling right down on the pavements. The refugees thronged this spot, and if one wished to find some one from Suwalki that was the place to look. There one could also hear the most blood-curdling tales. Suwalki must have been burned up fifty times the first day.

Evening came at last, bringing even more people to get under cover; those who had driven or walked to Vilno. Our hotel had people lying about in the corridors. The children were showing the effects of all they had been through, and were nervous, restless, and difficult to manage.

We had just settled down for the night when a messenger from my husband came. How glad I was to see that dear handwriting which told me of his distress over the news, and also that he was sure I should do the right thing—that the messenger, a friend, would do all necessary to get us out of the hotel and into our own house. I had quite forgotten that we had a house there! In an apartment of it was the office of my husband's Warsaw engineering firm. Early the next morning we started out to find the place. How good it was to feel that at least one roof belonged to us in that town. The engineers and manager had all been called to serve in the army, leaving only a curious old serving-man who looked upon us with suspicion. We found the manager's room had couches, and was very comfortable, and a great room was equipped with drawing-tables which made quite ideal beds when one had slept on the floor a night or two. There was a large reception-room—and, oh! joy, a kitchen—though a tiny one—with a samovar! We hired some more things, and found a private family who would serve us with meals.

By night we were once more living with a semblance of order. I was to go to meet my husband at the station at twelve o'clock. It had grown very cold and was raining. The station was packed full of people, who had no place else to go. The train was four hours late, but finally did arrive—and—one refugee in Vilno was happy.

The next day my husband and I went about seeing various people—but always together—we were afraid of losing each other.

Thursday—five days and a half after our arrival, we decided to leave for Warsaw, and turn the apartment over to one of our friends from Suwalki who was almost without means. Our Committee was in Warsaw, and it seemed we could do more good there. In Warsaw, we had a properly furnished house where we often stayed. Once more a hurried packing up. With us we took our governess, nurse-maid, and cook. When at the station waiting for the train, which was very late, we saw a number of Japanese officers drinking tea. All trains were overfilled, but some force was driving us farther, so we went. We barely managed to get seats. I regretted not having worn my

uniform—having on the only costume in my possession.

Oh! what an endless journey it was. Everything was out of order,—but at last, Warsaw!

CHAPTER IX

WARSAW

WARSAW looked curiously unfamiliar, even our own house—a large modern building with one apartment kept always ready for our occupancy. Ah! That was a pleasure to come into our own home with actual comforts and feel we might get things together once more, just a week from our forlorn arrival in Vilno when I did not know where my husband was.

We bought supplies immediately, and as there were two servants in the apartment, soon had quite a household again. Such a dragging in of all sorts of supplies!

Sunday we went to the little English chapel; there were a few people there. It was wonderfully sweet to hear the familiar hymns. The chaplain and his wife were old acquaintances of mine —she and their children were in England.

Monday we bought supplies. I hunted up a former nurse, who had married; finding her alone with her old mother-in-law to support, her husband having been called to service. Poor thing, in such circumstances, expecting a child—she was much changed from our pretty Cracow peasant girl in her bright costume. Her savings had disappeared, and poor Marysia was not even assured from want.

That night we went to a theatrical performance —what—I have forgotten. Most things seem photographed on my mind, but only the circumstance remains in this instance.

Tuesday my husband got a letter from his father and mother begging him to come to Lublin, the family home. Of course he had to go, but I could not leave the children. That day, full of rumours and uncertainty, is also a memory, which will always remain.

Wednesday, too, Wednesday night about eleven my husband returned to us. He had but greeted his parents, spent two short hours with the dear old people, and, filled with disquietude over the rumours flying about, had returned to us. Well

Baby Wanda and her Polish Nurses in Cracow Costume

that he did, for the next morning before day had fully dawned the Zeppelins visited us! Warsaw was bombarded!

Such explosions—and the return shots—people screaming—the town was alive in a moment and the exodus began. Our servants came rushing in demanding to go farther away. We still thought it was not necessary, especially as there was a committee meeting called for that day, but about noon there was some more bombarding—the Zeppelins doing greater damage. A hospital was struck and people were killed in the streets.

That afternoon, the chaplain from the English chapel called to bid us good-bye. He was off to Moscow. All were going. He offered to get us seats in the special train which was leaving. We declined, thinking it was not necessary, but toward night the news grew worse. The army of the enemy was approaching Warsaw. A battle was inevitable. Troops and artillery wagons filled the streets of the city.

Thursday night we did not go to bed because we went to see relatives and could not get back until the early morning hours, when we immedi-

ately made plans to get away from Warsaw on Saturday morning.

On Friday, we were again favoured with the Zeppelins. That death dropping from the heavens—like rain on the just and the unjust is one of the few things I could not get used to. It always left me weak and trembling and hugging my babies, hoping that if death came to us we should all go together. That day we turned over the new supplies to our poor Marysia, telling her to fetch her mother-in-law and live in our apartment. Poor soul—what has happened to her by now?

A visit to the station revealed an awful state of affairs. People mad with fear, camping about in the hopes of securing a place on the train. The poor little children crying from hunger—women with newly-born infants—all struggling to get something—they knew not what. Food was scarce in Warsaw and at the station there was not an atom. Where the buffet had been, was crushed full of humanity—or what had been humanity before fear had taken possession of it.

We could do nothing to help. Our own desire

was also to get away—away from the fear—where we might rest.

We managed to work our way to the ticket office, only to find the tickets would not be sold until seven in the morning! No amount of persuasion helped. I took my place there at the ticket office so we should at least be first in the morning, while my husband went back to the apartment to tell our governess, Panna Jadwiga, to have all ready when we came in the morning.

In those four hours of waiting (until two o'clock Saturday morning) for my husband to return, what things I saw—what essence of misery! We had a red-capped porter, but he told us some one must be with him. My husband brought a little food, but how could one eat with those starving creatures about? My husband and the man took turns standing at the window. Once a crowd pushing to get in the station hurt an *enceinte* woman. Through the fright and pressure she gave birth to her child—a little lifeless mite. We managed to get her through to where the Red Cross train was leaving. They took her on, with her dead baby wrapped in her petticoat—to go

where? To do what when she got there? The pitiful circumstance raised hardly a ripple on that crowd. People at such times take everything as a matter of course.

At six, I went to fetch the children, not even conscious of being tired. They were just eating breakfast, under protest. How I dreaded taking them into that human vortex, but I had to be glad we could get away, and, in a few minutes, I had completed our arrangements, saying goodbye to that homelike apartment.

Once more we were on the road, bag and baggage, off for Vitebsk, where we had no house of our own to walk into. All in Warsaw seemed going in one direction, to the Petrogradski station, one of those spots which is a long distance from every place.

On the bridge over the Vistula, we were kept waiting some time by passing troops and forage-wagons, and the sound of them brought back Suwalki forcibly to mind. Eventually we reached our destination. We started to literally break our way through to the gate where my husband was waiting, Panna Jadwiga, the cook, and the

maid, each carrying a child in her arms, with two men laden with luggage following. We had to climb over many who had finally succumbed to the rigours of the night. The crowd was apathetic. Our train was possible only for people who could pay first-class fares and place cards besides. When we got near the gates the pressure began and the children cried until they were carried shoulder high. At last the gates were opened, and we got to our places without further discomfort, only we were alone with the children, the servants being in the second car. Just one week before we had arrived in Warsaw from Vilno—and now —already on our way farther. How much had happened in that short week!

I began to feel like the Wandering Jew; and Jews there were in that train, the first I ever saw travel on a Saturday in Poland.

CHAPTER X

WE ARRIVE IN RUSSIA

I REMEMBER when we were nearing Brest Litowsk, the great fortress, how secure we felt—and how we spoke of the word she would speak to the enemy.

The city lay in the bright afternoon sunshine, as we passed through, quiet and sure of herself, not knowing even then that traitors were planning to blow up her great magazines of supplies, thus robbing thousands upon thousands of men of ammunition and sending them defenceless to meet the enemy!

In the morning, September 26th, we arrived in Vitebsk. It was very frosty, almost like winter. My husband liked the town very much, and had friends there, many owning estates in the neighbourhood. He had done his army service in Vitebsk, and was telling me tales of his experi-

ences as a junior officer. We began to smile once more and the burden lightened. Even when we discovered all the hotels to be crowded with refugees, we did not lose courage.

In one hotel we found a big room with one tiny bed. All beds had been taken for the new hospitals, but, as the proprietors remarked, there was lots of room on the floor! Afterwards he gave us a tiny room for my husband, and then we were quite delighted. The mattress made a bed for the children on the floor. I lay upon the spring, Panna Jadwiga dropped down beside the children, and the two servants curled up anywhere; and all were glad to be there.

The next day, we searched for some sort of a dwelling, and found a wretched place, unsanitary as possible, under a hill beside a barracks, but we knew by that time that it was lucky to find even the worst of places. We agreed to take it, but there was still a two days' wait even then before it was ours.

That same night my husband was notified that Suwalki had been cleared of the Germans, and that he was to return. Again I must stay with

the children, and could not go with my husband. On Tuesday afternoon, he—with a lot of officials—left on what proved an eventful journey. How I wanted to go, too.

It was a whole ten days before my husband returned, as from the dead, bringing us much news—and two trunks full of clothes! My clothes were fairly untouched. Also some silver had been recovered.

He had found our place in an awful state, it having been used as officers' quarters. However, they had left in too much of a hurry to carry off much. Our people had lived through terrible things, but only a few of them lost their lives. All the linen, the instruments, and everything removable had been taken from our hospital. After the battles near Suwalki, as the foe was driven back to East Prussia, there were said to be seven or eight thousand wounded!

My husband had been given a post in Lemberg as chief or inspector of the Sanitary Engineers, and had just two days to spare with his little family. How hard it was to let him go, but no children were allowed in occupied territory.

CHAPTER XI

I SEE MY HOME ONCE MORE!

On the 22nd day of October I was allowed to go to Suwalki, having a lot of instruments which had been bought and paid for in Warsaw while our hospital was still in existence. There was need for these in Suwalki, and I was longing to get into hospital work once more. I had been helping only at odd times, mostly in the sanitary trains. There being need for haste I did not travel with the slow-going empty Red Cross trains. The children were in excellent hands and it was quite possible for me to leave for a week or more.

In Vitebsk, the station was full of men entraining for the front, now the army was well into Prussia. Almost as soon as our train started something interesting happened. A Russian lady in my coupé, seeing I wore a Red Cross uniform, began to tell me something about a wounded

Cossack—so much I understood even with my little knowledge of Russian. When I told her I was an American we began to speak in the language neither of us liked—German—but it was our only mutual tongue! She told me a young Cossack, discharged from the hospital, was standing in the corridor—weeping—surely something in that to shock one! We went together to him—finally getting his story. What I did not understand she translated for me. He was young, boyish—had been wounded and his right arm had been amputated, but what seemed to cause him the most pain was that he could never ride again. He had been dismissed from the hospital in Vitebsk and had been told to go to Dwinsk. At the station, the quartermaster was to pay him—but he had gone to the station at twelve noon the day before, and at this time it was almost five in the afternoon! The quartermaster had not come, and our Cossack, weak though he was, had told no one his difficulties, and had waited all night in the station. Finally, the station-master told him to wait no longer, but to go on to Dwinsk, where he would draw his pay,

and, when he understood the circumstances, gave him a rouble; but the train left immediately and the poor fellow had had no time to get anything to eat. He seemed to feel bitter over what was really no one's fault. He should have told his troubles before they grew so great, but he was so very hungry and weak. We took him into our coupé and he demolished our combined lunches. I had a thermos bottle of hot tea. When he had eaten and was not quite so unhappy he said it "was always so with the Cossacks—as long as they were fit—at the front of the battle—but a wounded Cossack was no good to any one." I had a flask of cognac and asked if he wanted some. After he had drained off the tiny screw top full which I had a right to give him as medicine, he wiped his mustache, twisting it gallantly, saying, "Now I am a man, and will weep no more."

Those tears, Slavonic tears, are not a sign of weakness, but of overwhelming temperament. Let no one judge the European from the American or English standpoint; different countries, different customs, not that they all cry—but if so, it does not follow that man is less of a man for

doing so. There, for instance, the men kiss each other, carefully kissing the air in the direction of the ear, as a rule. How curious it is to see such a thing here. But *they* think we are cold and unfeeling.

My journey to Vilno was quiet enough and there I had to wait some hours for a train to Suwalki; long enough to see our apartment and a lot of people who were our fellow refugees. As yet they had not been encouraged to return. The train left at six in the evening, and what a curious mixture it carried. All sorts and conditions of men, soldiers, civilians, Jews going after trade, etc. All went well enough until we reached Olita, the spot where the man had given tea and fresh bread for the people in my charge; here they also had known trouble and the town seemed very desolate. It was an uncomfortable place to be dumped out at one o'clock in the morning. We had travelled so slowly; and here there was not a sign of a train.

There were a lot of Cossacks waiting to be sent on with their horses. Their Captain was very kind when my companion, a doctor's wife, ex-

plained I was carrying instruments to the hospital in Suwalki. He routed out the station-master saying there *had* to be a train—the Cossacks were tired of waiting—and we were to be given a place. A train was made up, and, as if by magic, a lot of wretched-looking Jews put in an appearance; the station-master was forced to sell tickets. For two stations he asked us to be in a caboose sort of an affair until they got hold of a proper carriage —at Olita there were none—those poor Jews came also. One started to make a fire—it was cold; the fuel being free, he was not sparing of it, and the car almost caught fire from the red-hot stove. Of course, the poor Jew was thrown out bodily, and the stove after him at the next station. There we got into a comfortable carriage with only the officers; but it was unheated and cold. Instead of reaching Suwalki soon, we waited hours, and then crawled along awhile and waited again. So on through the day and evening, and still ordinarily an hour away from Suwalki. But already we had seen evidence of war,—crosses standing out against the sky—marking where the slain lay.

The whole night we waited, until stiff with the

cold, but at half-past six we really got in. The destroyed railroad had just been hastily rebuilt. Even at our snail's pace we sometimes rocked like a ship in a high sea.

Curious it was, that return! The old station was changed, but still packed with people. Many were leaving Suwalki; those who had been there during the German occupation. One thing was noticeable—those who had been dark, were grown white. Vehicles there were of course none! Insisting on starting afoot, dark as it was we plunged out into the gloom on a road so rough we appreciated the difficulties the train had met with.

There were many things to seize our attention; ruined houses, broken-down fences. Everything where it did not belong. Troops on the march, who made instant way for us, advising eagerly how to avoid pitfalls. Gathering around us interestedly, officers and men, with no fear of drunken amiabilities.

It was getting less dark when we reached the neighbourhood of our former home, but, lacking the courage to go there without a little rest and preparation, I went first with the doctor's wife

to her home. Her husband was camping in what had been their very charming house. The cook had the real "war" expression stamped on her face, much the same look must have those who have gone through an earthquake. A heroine she was, however, for when the officers left, without saying "good-bye," they set the house on fire, one dumping the contents of the lamp into the middle of his bed, and setting a match to it; but she, hiding in a wardrobe for fear of being taken along, saw this charming way of repaying hospitality, and extinguished the blaze. Her hands were terribly scarred, but her attitude of mind to be envied. The house was almost uninhabitable; but we did get some coffee.

At half-past eight I started for our house. Jacob, the man servant, knew I was coming only a half-hour before I reached there, so I saw things as they were. Alas! My beautiful home was ruined. Knee-deep it was with things strewn about the floor,—every drawer, every closet emptied out! Papers, books, the very clothes my husband had brought to Vitebsk had lain in the accumulated dirt.

I walked through the drawing-rooms, trying my best not to breathe until I could get my head out of a window, but when I came to the library I gave up. It was so hideously befouled;—the books were torn to pieces,—that I gazed in astonishment. That men could have done such a degenerate thing! We had had such a valuable collection of old books, manuscripts, seals, engravings, an extensive English library, some beautiful specimens of Polish peasants' art in carving and weaving,—and all had been thrown down in that hideous filth! My husband had told me there was no use talking of what the house looked like —that I had better go! I understood! He thought it would make me a better Pole to see how they were used by the army which came to set them free; and teach our boys accordingly. After those two awful rooms, which had been the apple of my eye, Jacob asked me to come to see the dining-room and pantries. Heavens! Could a worse picture of wanton desolation exist? China, glass, linen, trodden upon; used and thrown down. But, the pantries exceeded all else in fiendish, degenerate ingenuity,—for the rows upon rows

of jam pots, marmalade, preserves, and honey glasses had been emptied of their contents, filled with filth and returned to the shelves.

It was like an inferno that house; not as if *men* had occupied it—a pig sty is no comparison! Jacob told me there were a lot of officers and about forty soldiers. They had also quartered soldiers in the hospital on the first floor.

Poor old house! It seemed human and asking for relief. I wondered what more they could have done had the occupation been longer.

After going through with my inspection to the bitter end, I ordered Jacob with the help of his wife and daughter to clean it up, make it ready for occupancy.

After all the horrible things, Jacob had one pleasure in store for me. He had taken *my* flag down from the boudoir walls, and laid it under a heavy wardrobe. This at least had not been insulted!

Leaving Jacob to his unpleasant work, I went to the Chief of Police who was bringing order out of chaos in the town, telling him what was missing. As far as I could judge it was my hus-

band's furs, travelling rugs, our food supplies, wines, all linen, most of the silver, much jewelry. I had taken with me only what I had in my case. All those things were gone. The rest could much of it be cleaned.

Having done my duty, I started out to see the town. Everywhere the same story as in my own home. Could men have done this thing,—I could hardly believe my own eyes when I saw the Russian church! Impossible to write—a pit of filth unspeakable,—the altar desecrated—the icons!— It flashed across my mind the verdict in the New Testament: "Be not deceived. God is not mocked, for what a man soweth that shall he also reap." How often I have had that verse in mind since that day. Sooner or later the army which desecrated God's house, and the homes of the people will pay the reckoning!

The Cossacks, wild with fury over what the Germans had done, started on a journey of vengeance into East Prussia. All the men I ever spoke to had the same desire,—vengeance for desecration! But not in the same way. A Slav would never use German methods; they would

burn, destroy; more innocent people would suffer for the sins of others! The first time the Russians were in East Prussia they had not wrought destruction.

I went to the hospital, where, after giving up the instruments I had brought, I found one of the priests—a friend. In the Catholic Church there had been no destruction. Packed with townspeople who were afraid to go home, the priest had kept services going, continually. This priest suggested that I go into the country to pick up children left alone in the fields—the Germans having taken all able-bodied peasants, men and women.

In a light wagon the doctor's wife and I left Suwalki on the road which led to our villa. We were to be met by a Red Cross automobile at a point near a village.

CHAPTER XII

THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY

On all sides of Suwalki had been the battlefield. There were great holes torn in the earth, trenches dug, and men buried. On one hillock we passed, where the rain had washed off the slight covering of earth, we saw boots sticking out! The man driving us said ten thousand were buried there—that I cannot vouch for—but it seemed as if it might be true. Wherever we went there were graves—big graves hastily made—even now men were working to pile earth on the insufficiently buried. When we got to the forest we did not see so many, but the road was torn by artillery wagons,—trees were broken off at the roots. We had to walk now, a fearsome thing in the haunted forest. At one spot we came upon our forester. He was working, but recognizing who it was, he threw down his tools with the greeting,

"Oh! my lady, we thought you were all dead, because the dog is here."

Our little dog Dash, taken by force along with the wagon by our acquaintance, during the evacuation of Suwalki, had been lost in the forest beyond Sejny, through the fleeing people, marching armies, and battlefields she had sought us. Coming at last to our villa, the forester had taken her to his cottage, and had fed and cared for her. It was like something from the other life, when that wiggling mass of happiness saw us.

The forester told me our villa had been burned down by the Germans; that all their food had been taken, their potatoes dug up, etc.

We went farther on our way, and soon came nearer the recent battlefields, and found children wandering about, left alone—the parents driven into East Prussia; one child of four carried a baby of six months. They had eaten earth in the extremity of their hunger. How many days had they wandered?

Our quest lasted over two days, finding always poor little waifs who had no roof to cover them. Every hut was burned down; gruesome work it

was. Many times we saw dead men. I wondered why we struggled so to save our lives when so many had gone down. Going through the forest at dusk, we heard a child's cry, but could not locate the sound. In our search a wounded horse plunging through the underbrush came upon us. He passed so near I could have touched him. Frightened, I clung to a tree for dear life. How glad we were to find the automobile waiting for us, and to know the children sent back had arrived. We gathered over eighty—starving, literally starving to death. In Suwalki they were put into a school building. My governess was to take charge.

That same night a sanitary train was leaving for Vitebsk with a tremendous load of wounded,—work enough. On that journey, almost three days, the little dog Dash helped pass the time for the wounded officers. I went into the operating car at eight in the morning, leaving for meals only, staying until nine at night; it was trying work. The effort of standing is in itself much, but the sight of so much suffering, the tug at the heart strings; and one *never* gets through! We

stopped several hours at Vilno to work in the large room for that purpose at the station. Every one was exhausted, and we could not crowd the men into the operating car. At the station, twenty at a time could be attended to. Most of the men had toothache aside from their wounds, and all coughed. It seemed a rule in that climate, at least, that all wounded suffer from the lungs in some form or other,—inflammation was the usual thing! We used to paint the aching teeth with iodine, putting absorbent cotton in them. The idea that something was being done for them helped, I imagine, more than anything actually done.

Arriving in Vitebsk without any startling adventures, I was welcomed hilariously by the children who had not expected to see Dash.

Again a time of comparative quiet. Each day was like a week. The time moved so slowly. No letters from my husband,—only when some one brought them to me. A telegram I had each day, so misspelled there was little sense in it, and small satisfaction.

CHAPTER XIII

OFF TO GALICIA

How tiresome it was in Vitebsk! We had only the ebb-tide of war; no excitement, unless the impossible newspaper extras could be regarded in this light. My Russian was most elementary, so it was out of the question to work in the hospitals; besides, there were sisters enough. We lived near a barracks, to my children's delight. Every time they went for a walk they brought back a soldier or two(!) who were delighted to have so much notice taken of them, and who played beautifully with the children.

There is a wonderful childlike quality in those men. The samovar was always ordered for them, lots of bread and butter and of course cigarettes. Naturally the popularity of the children grew by leaps and bounds. When I decided to go to Lemberg the first week in December, having had

no word from my husband for five days, the children promised to be very good and content during my absence if they might have the soldiers to play with, and money to buy them little presents. A friend advised waiting and going into Galicia with a Red Cross train, but I was too impatient for that. At the station an officer told me in spite of my Red Cross uniform I could not get into Galicia without a permit, because there were so many spies about. But I decided to take my chances.

The journey to Kiew was uneventful, until we reached the long bridge just beyond the city. There we were held from nine o'clock in the evening until half-past one in the morning—why, nobody knew. The night was like day because of the searchlight. Finally, when a fast train thundered by we were released. Afterwards, I learned that a high personage was on his way from Lemberg and his train had to have a clear way.

Kiew is a lovely old-world city; so quaint, yet a busy, progressive place. After spending the rest of the night and the day there, I took the nine o'clock evening train for Brody. A very

interesting lot of people were my travelling companions; especially I remember a Russian lady. We had a long stretch together for the train did not come in until eleven o'clock. In all that time I did not see one unusual thing; it might have been peace times.

At Brody, we had to change cars—then the gendarmes came for the special passports—I had only my Red Cross certificate. It seemed so strictly against orders that every one said I might as well make up my mind to wait for the next train. The gendarmes said that this was the only possible course; but I told them I could not, that it would bring me into Lemberg at night, that I did not know if my husband were in the city, and I demanded to see the Captain of the gendarmes. The Captain was very nice, but at first firm in his decision, even offering me his office to sit in until permission came from the Governor-General. I simply said, "Captain, I must go through now. You can't expect me to stop in Brody all night—such an awful hole—or to arrive in Lemberg at night!"

The Author in Red Cross Uniform

"Why did the lady not tell her husband? Will he wish to have the lady there?"

"Oh, if that is the difficulty you are safe—my husband wishes me to come, I am sure."

"It is impossible. There are many spies about. I would get into trouble."

"Please, Captain, I am an American, and I must go with that train. Send a telegram to my husband, but let me go!"

After looking through my documents and Red Cross papers once more, he decided to let me go with the promise my husband would himself tell the Governor-General how I got in. As he put me on the train, he said it was well for him all the ladies were not from America, since they did as they pleased.

We arrived in Lemberg at two o'clock. There were so few vehicles I had to wait a long time on the station—crowded, though it is an enormous place. There was the untidiness about it which goes with war, with soldiers lying about on the floor, etc.

After a long wait I got a *doroszka*, with a coachman who told me a lot about the occupation

of Lemberg. How the Austrians went without a word—and the Russians just walked in—and were very free with their money.

Arriving at the address given me by my husband I found it was the *magistrate* (the city buildings) with two soldiers on guard, and a number of automobiles before the door.

When the soldier finally understood what it was I said, he dashed off, burst into my husband's room announcing,

"There is a Sister down below who says she is somebody's wife!"

My husband laughed and said, "She must be mine! That sounds like my wife's Russian!"

To say he was astonished is putting it mildly. My letters and telegrams began to come after I had been there a day or two. The Governor-General was also amused at my success in getting in, and gave me a permission to visit Galicia whenever I wished. Unfortunately this was of no avail.

Lemberg was in a curious state. There was a great deal of poverty, because all salaries had been stopped, the banks had gone, etc. The rich

Legitymacja № 1357

POLSKI KOMITET POMOCY SANITARNEJ

zaświadcza niniejszem, iż oddawca niniejszego

Pani Laura Turczynowiczowa

jest współpracownikiem Komitetu, jako starsza

~~w wydziale~~: Siostra miłosierdzia

i prosi o okazanie mu wszelkiej pomocy.

Właściciel tej legitymacji ma prawo używania czerwonej z Syreną i Czerwonego Krzyża.

Prezes Komitetu: [signature]

Sekretarz Komitetu: [signature]

Warszawa, dn. 15 września 1914 r.

Podpis właściciela: Laura Turczynowiczowa

Facsimile of the Polish Red Cross Certificate

Удостовѣреніе № 1357

ПОЛЬСКІЙ КОМИТЕТЪ САНИТАРНОЙ ПОМОЩИ

состоящій подъ покровительствомъ Главнаго Управленія Россійскаго Общества Краснаго Креста свидѣтельствуетъ, что предъявитель сего

Гжа Ляура Турчиновичъ

состоитъ сотрудникомъ Комитета въ ~~отдѣленіи~~:

качествѣ старшей сестры милосердія

и проситъ оказывать ему надлежащее содѣйствіе.

Владѣлецъ сего Удостовѣренія имѣетъ право пользоваться (кромѣ особаго отличающаго знака съ Сиреной) знакомъ Краснаго Креста.

Уполномоченный: [signature]

Варшава, 2 сентября 1914 г.

Подпись владѣльца: Laura de Turczynowicz

Facsimile of Russian Red Cross Certificate

(Reverse of Above)

people were worse off than the poor. Nevertheless the theatres were open, and were well patronized. The town was not sad. The shop people sold everything they had, but could not get more merchandise. A very good soup kitchen had been opened so the townspeople need not starve. Fuel was the greatest difficulty. Many peasants earned money by bringing wood from the surrounding forests.

Everything went on as usual, even to the number of Austrian uniforms seen upon the streets. The Russians gave their prisoners a great deal of freedom, the men living often in their own homes, or with friends. They were not objects of suspicion.

Looking back it seems like a dream—those happy days we had together in Lemberg, even Teodor, my husband's orderly acquires a halo. He was such a character. From the first moment, he almost roasted me with the tremendous fire he insisted on always making—we thought the stove would crack. It was his way of doing me honour. Teodor was wounded in the forefinger of his right hand, and was mightily afraid I would

ask to see it. Comfortable he was, and not anxious to go back to the trenches. The engineers said that all their comforts were taken and brought to us. He was so proud of having a Sister in his care. Each day there would be something new which he had discovered—once a bunch of old English newspapers from before the war—again a powder box—to say nothing of an elaborate way to serve tea. Of himself he said he was "Gold, not Teodor," so honest he felt himself to be.

We called on many of our acquaintances. My husband's old professor was in the university there, and very glad to have a friend at court.

I talked with many people of the city. Most of them had relations in the Kingdom of Poland, and were glad they could go to Warsaw. Some said that, if the Russians evacuated, they would surely go along for fear of what would happen to them should their own army return, those poor people not knowing which direction to turn, but all believing in the ultimate triumph and freedom of Poland. A judge came to ask us if we could not get a pair of shoes for himself and wife. He had on galoshes, while she had to stay at home.

They had been on a visit and had been caught in Lemberg. Of course my husband gave them money for their most pressing needs, and was able to get some work for the judge. So it was with many. Galicia always was poor and full of people living on state salaries—which suddenly had stopped.

One night, we went to a cabaret where they tried to be gay without wine or spirits of any kind. It was funny to hear a man order a bottle of water. The Lemberger especially did not like it,—but how decorous was that cabaret! At the "Hotel George," *the* place of Lemberg, it was just the same! An American with the Red Cross said it was like a Sunday School. I suppose after there has been no wine nor wodka for many years, people will learn to be gay because they are *glad*, not because of anything they may have to drink.

On the 16th of December, I was once more in Vitebsk, finding all very well, and a pressing request for me to sing at a Red Cross concert (for the benefit of the Warsaw sufferers, to get coal, etc., for them) in the Opera House Christmas evening. Though I had not sung since the war began, it was impossible to refuse.

The concert was a great success, even though Warsaw was hanging in the balance—the battle fiercely raging. Our tableaus or living pictures were changed at the last moment for fear we had made them too decided, but patriotic they were!

I was Britania. Naturally a most lovely girl in national costume was Russia; poor little Belgium forgot her lines. France called for a box to stand on because she could not be seen, etc.—but the concert and pictures were a success, and something over three thousand roubles cleared.

CHAPTER XIV

BACK TO SUWALKI

I WAS expecting my husband continually, but he did not come. New Years, and still alone! The whole month of January went by in anxious waiting. Finally, on the 28th, he came unannounced. In arranging a fever hospital near Lemberg he had contracted an illness, a serious one, and was really not fit to travel. This was the first of a series of misfortunes, for he had permission for us to return to Suwalki, and we decided to go. The hospital work called me and we were so badly situated in Vitebsk. Wherever we were, the separation was the same. Our own home was always better. Suwalki was quiet, schools were open, the Governor was in residence, so we decided to go on the 2nd of February.

This time the journey was made without difficulty in first-class carriages all the way. We

arrived at midnight on the 3rd. I remember the ride over the snow, the sleigh bells, the glorious moonlight, through the quiet town to our home, —ours even if desecrated. Jacob had arranged six rooms in the left wing, and had transferred the kitchen to what had been the bathroom, big enough for two kitchens! There was furniture enough for this suite after a vigorous cleansing process. The rest of the house was shut off entirely. Even though it was so terribly cold, I heaved a sigh of relief to be back after all the wanderings.

My husband was tired out by the journey, so I bent all my energies to making him comfortable. However, I had a new patient. My little boy Wladek was feverish. Not much time for outside work for me! But enough to see how the little children picked up in the fields were getting on. With our Panna Jadwiga they were well cared for and getting to look more like children.

Food to buy we found in plenty. Petroleum, everything—a few bottles of spiritus for the lamps we also discovered. Of course there was no gas.

The townspeople were so glad to have us back.

It was quite touching. If all had been in good health I should have been almost happy for two days, helping rearrange the hospital in the first floor of our house.

Wladek grew no better. A curious lethargy had possession of the child. The doctor could not decide what the trouble was, but the fever grew.

On the 8th bad news came. My husband had to go back to his post, and Suwalki was once more to be evacuated.

On the 9th Wladek was no better. We suspected typhus. That night I insisted on my husband leaving, saying I would meet him in Warsaw. It was dangerous for him to stay longer. He must not be caught, and with the ill child I could not go. The poor little fellow began to be delirious. Ah! that night when we sat together and spoke as if the great separation were not at hand —and the good-bye!

I listened to my husband's footsteps on the frozen snow, one last look, then silence as of death. I knew the impossibility of going with Wladek, and his twin brother was sickening. Surely the Germans would come and find me!

In the morning the doctor promised to come again in the afternoon, but when he finally came in the evening it was only for a moment to say he would come in the morning and . . . went straight to the station. He knew well enough what it was, but did not wish to tell me.

On the 10th the whole town was on the move—the same haste but less accommodation, and bitter cold weather. There were only unheated freight cars if I had wished to risk my boy's life. It seemed better to let him die in his bed than out in the open—I felt like a rat in a trap. Many people who had not stopped in the first evacuation were remaining, thinking if the Germans came their stay would be a short one.

The wires were cut. I could not telegraph! And all the doctors were gone! I tried to put all thought out of my mind except my children; to accept the inevitable.

Again supplies were bought and carried in, all I could get, and the moment it was possible to leave Wladek I spent concealing them in various places where it seemed unlikely any one would look.

On the 11th of February, 1915, Suwalki was once more quite empty. All avenues of escape were closed. We were waiting the sacrifice. The Russian army was retreating.

That night, bending over my sick boy, hearing sounds of voices in the house, I woke my cook and taking a candle went to investigate. The place was full of Russian soldiers ready for the march. They begged leave to rest. I told them they should have what comfort I could give them if they would only be quiet as there was a sick child.

My cook boiled samovar after samovar, but even then there was too little to go round. The officers were invited into the rooms I was occupying, and they told me a little of what was happening. The whole army was on the move. They asked if I could not get away.

The next morning my midnight visitors were all gone, but the gardens and streets were alive with men—all mixed together, infantry, artillery, Red Cross, forage-wagons, wounded, Sisters, doctors, priests—with that curious murmur as of many bees. Muddy slush almost to the knees. A thaw had set in. Men and animals suffered

discomfort, and were dissatisfied. I went out in all this to find a doctor who would come to us. I shall not forget that search; in and out among the wagons, among the horses—and I am timid by nature. Before the war I was afraid of a mouse, of thunder. But no more!

The soldiers assisted me as much as possible. I found several lazarettes with doctors in charge, but they were forbidden to leave without permission, and to get the permission was difficult.

I was sorry for the Red Cross Sisters. They looked wearied and dishevelled after the retreat, and all were anxious.

I finally found the surgeon in charge—like a general—and he came most willingly.

The diagnosis was typhus, the bad kind. I had known it myself. The doctor said:

"Keep up your courage; on you depends your child's life. God will help you. He will save the boy without a doctor!"

The kind soul, often I thought and prayed for him, a poor ill-used prisoner that he was.

I went back with him to where his staff was waiting. His wife, who was a Sister, had grown

anxious in his absence. How I envied her! He gave me two bottles of champagne. Our cellars had been emptied by the Germans, and there was great need of something for my poor baby. I said good-bye to those kind, unfortunate people, and picked my way through the streets across the park towards home. Many of the men, tired out, had thrown themselves down on the ground. One had to climb over them. Some had built fires to cook food. How miserable it was; and we were all in the same boat.

Four soldiers who were very ill, hardly able to walk, were entrusted to my care by a doctor, who I met on my way back. He said they would be better with me. It was no use torturing them by dragging them along, so I took them home, giving them into my cook's care.

Wladek was growing steadily worse. It was necessary to forget everything in the fight for his life. The babble of delirium was awful to hear. It tore my heart when he constantly called for his father, "Tatuś—Tatuś." I thought after living through that moment—nothing could reach me, but I did not know.

"At least we had a comfortable, well-arranged apartment. Surely the Germans if they came, would leave me that corner of my own house. We had food, fuel, and I must think only of the children," so I talked to myself.

Little Wanda and Staś still played together, though I noticed Stas was not himself. What one of the twins had the other invariably took.

There was a nurse; Panna Jadwiga had gone to Vilno with those children when the town was evacuated; my cook, a host in herself! Jacob the butler, his wife, and daughter, a girl not yet seventeen.

Jacob lived in what had been our kitchen in reach of the bell. It might have been worse, I told myself, and prepared to face the situation.

The Russian army left suddenly, going toward Sejny—not a soul on the streets. Silence! Three or four hours later they came rapidly through the town, going towards Augustowo, and once more silence. At eleven o'clock there were still artillery wagons on the streets. I went to the four soldiers. The cook had given them food, they were lying in comfortable beds, and so pitifully

grateful. They said, "If the Germans come we will leave you, little Sister!"

That was an awful night! I had to hold Wladek in bed. The little tongue never stopped an instant. I was worn out, having been already three nights continually on my feet, but at last morning dawned on an empty town. Not a soldier or a horse was in sight.

About nine o'clock a peasant came to tell me the Germans were coming! Some one had seen them. I made the four soldiers eat, and gave them food and cigarettes to carry with them. They were ill men. After a mutual blessing they went back to await their fate.

Suddenly hearing an uproar, I saw some of the bad elements of the town looting, searching for food, knocking each other down, screaming—a horrid sight! The Jews who were always so meek, had now more self-assertion, strutting about, stretching up until they looked inches taller. It was hard work to tear myself away from the balcony. I, too, seemed unable to control myself, running from the balcony to the child and from the child to the balcony.

At eleven the streets again grew quiet, the time was near, and I saw the first *pikel-haube* come around the corner, rifle cocked—on the lookout for snipers!

CHAPTER XV

THE GERMANS OCCUPY SUWALKI

THE first one was soon followed by his comrades. Then an officer, who rounded the corner, coming to a stop directly before our windows. An old Jewess stepped out and saying, "*Guten Tag,*" handed him a packet of papers, and gave various directions with much gesticulation. A spy at our very door! A woman I had seen many times! Busy with Wladek I saw no more for a while when a cry from the two other children made me rush to the window. They were coming into our court. The soldiers! And in a moment rushed into the room where we were, in spite of the signs tacked up on all doors "Tyfus." Seeing me in the Red Cross uniform they held back a moment. One bolder than his comrades laughed saying, "She is trying to deceive us," and came toward me with a threatening gesture. Then with all my

fear, God gave me strength to defy them. In German, which fortunately I speak very well, I asked what they wanted.

"Food and quarters."

"You cannot stop here. There is typhus."

"Show us the ill ones."

Opening the door to my own bedroom where the child lay, talking, moving the little hands incessantly, I saw that the nurse from the excess of fright had crawled under the bed. The soldier yanked her out, saying he would not hurt her, chucked her under the chin, and called her a "pretty animal!" Poor Stephania, she could hardly stand! I, in my anxiety, pushed the soldier from the room, to find the others already making themselves at home.

"You cannot stop here. Go away! I am not afraid of you; I am an American. If you do any harm to us the world shall hear of it!"

They had been drinking, and the very fact that I defied them made an impression.

"Go out on the road. I will send food to you."

They went. One of them, giving me a look of sympathy, said:

"You have my sympathy, Madame."

That gave me courage, and shutting the door I went back to my boy. Always the same; I should not have left his side for an instant.

The town by now was in an uproar, every one seemed screaming together. As I looked from the window, my hand touched the prayer-book lying on the table.

"Lord, give me a word, a promise, to keep me steadfast and sane!" The book opened at the 55th Psalm—"As for me I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me." Even in the stress of the moment reading to the end of the chapter—"Cast thy burden on the Lord." A conviction came to me then that God would keep us all safe!

Soon I had to wake to the fact that the house was being looted. Jacob, his wife, and daughter ran into the room. The soldiers had been knocking them about, taking all the food they could lay their hands upon. It was pandemonium let loose! An under-officer came to make a levy on my food for the army going through to Augustowo. He, with his men, looked into every hole and corner, but did not think to look inside the couches,

which were full of things! To see your provisions carried off by the enemy is not a pleasant sensation. I asked the under-officer if it were possible the town was to be looted and burned.

"Looted—yes—to revenge East Prussia! Burned, not yet,—not unless we go!"

These first men had a black cover drawn over their caps and afterwards I heard they were from the artillery. Always the worst! Just at this time there was a great tramping of horses right in the rooms under us—where the hospital had been arranged—a thundering knock on the door, and a captain with his staff walked in. A tremendously big man, he seemed to fill the place!

"*Guten Tag.*"

"*Guten Tag, meine Schwester—Hier habe ich quartier.*"

"Are you not afraid of typhus?"

"Nonsense—we are all inocculated. Is there really typhus?"

"Have you a doctor, captain? Let him decide!"

A very fat boy just from the university was presented to me; so young, twenty-three and inexperienced, to have such a responsibility. Ex-

amining Wladek he decided it was dysentery, and tore down my notices!

As there was no appeal, I tried to be amiable. The *Herr Kapitain* was not so bad; he cleared the house out, and at least only orderlies came through; but for us was left only the bedroom. Children, servants, all packed together with the typhus patient. The Captain was courteous enough, but said I would have to feed staff and men. That day seemed endless. With every moment came fresh troops, and I was glad the *Herr Kapitain* was in my apartments. At least there would be no looting. The rest of the house was full to overflowing with soldiers. Naturally they blamed the horrible disorder there on to the Russians. A telephone was soon in operation, and we were headquarters. All sorts of wires there were, and a rod sticking out of the roof. We were forbidden to go near that part of the house.

Every few minutes some one came to ask me to help them; the poor people, they thought I could make the soldiers give up pig or horse or chickens. At six the Captain told me he wished supper in half an hour. The cook seemed on the verge of

losing her reason with some one continually making a raid on the kitchen, but she managed to get ready by seven. There were eight officers at the table—and they demanded wine.

"I have no wine."

"The old Jewess told us you brought home two bottles of wine when the Russians left."

"That was given me for my children."

"The children have no typhus, the doctor says, so they do not need wine—bring it to us."

So I gave up my precious bottles. The forage-wagons of the Germans had not come; they had no food with them and no wines, but the town fed them to the last mouthful. They turned in at half-past ten, leaving an atmosphere you could cut. It was so thick with tobacco smoke! Once more I could be without interruption with my children, for I had to serve the officers, pour their tea, etc.; it seemed as if one could not live through another such day. My boy was unconscious, —talking—talking—talking—all night long—no rest for me! He needed constant attention, and his brother Staś was also very feverish, while Wanda girl was so nervous and excited she could

not sleep, wishing to talk with her mother. That night, the first of the German occupation, I began a journal, to write all that happened, like a daily letter to my husband. I hoped the Germans would not stay long! About my boy, I knew it was typhus,—the officers knew it too, only it did not please them to say so. And I resolved to pay no attention to what that fat boy, the medical student, should order. He wished to give all sorts of medicines—when the best treatment was constant baths (which, under the circumstances were impossible), or a cold compress around the body to take the temperature down. I knew it was a fight between heart and fever. The medicine was a spoonful of champagne at moments of great weakness, but the officers had finished that! —and a spoonful of milk, as food, but this also was out of the question. Nevertheless, I was determined to find something. Black coffee was to be had, and turned out to be my only medicine.

The night wore away. The child grew terribly weak about four o'clock, and it seemed as if he were going and were held only by sheer force of my desire. If he could only sleep! Staś slept

restlessly. Little Wanda was sorry for her mother, constantly waking to ask why Mammy did not lie down.

When six o'clock came the Captain thundered in, demanding breakfast, and hoping I had slept well.

Arousing those poor people lying about on the floor, I freshened my own costume, trying to look as formal as possible. There was no bread. The Captain, informed of this, brought a loaf. They finished my butter, and drank an enormous amount of coffee. As I served them the cook came to tell me a lot of people were waiting, begging me to intercede for them. An old man rushed in after her, threw himself on the floor, kissing my hands and knees, weepingly telling how the soldiers had held him, had taken his two young daughters, had looted the hut, even to his money buried in the earth of the floor. They had then gone, taking the girls with them. The poor father crawled around the table, kissing the officers' hands. They laughed uproariously when one gave him a push which sent him sprawling over the floor.

The Captain, seeing my look of disgust (I learned to conceal my feelings better afterwards), asked me, "Whatever was the trouble—why he howled so!"

After I told him what had happened the Captain looked black and silent for a moment; then said he could do nothing. The girls now belonged to the soldiers, and I even saw he was sorry. One of the others, however, laughed, saying the father was foolish to have stopped about when he was not wanted. That was my introduction to Prussian *Schrecklichkeit.*

The other people waiting had mostly been turned out of doors while the soldiers slept in their beds, or were asking help to get back a pig or a horse, or else they were injured. I told them to go away and be glad they had their lives, that just now there was no help, but I would do all that lay in my power.

We heard the sound of battle all that day over Augustowo way. It seemed already like a friend, our only connection with the world. Another day of miserable anxiety, the boy always worse, and the trouble of providing food for all those men.

I knew that a friendly seeming attitude on my part was our salvation. The Captain under all his gruffness had a kind heart, but even in that short time I had learned what the German system means. Their idea is so to frighten people that all semblance of humanity is stamped out! Every time something awful happened they said there was East Prussia to pay for.

A lady who had remained, came to ask me to beg that her bed clothing should not all be taken. The Captain inquired if the things asked for were mine.

"No."

"Then I cannot interfere. When something is taken from my quarters is time enough to make an inquiry."

It was about dinner-time when this occurred, and as in retribution, the officers were just about to sit down when my cook rushed in crying out that two soldiers came into the kitchen—while one held her (I am sure he bore the marks of her nails!) the other ran off with a ham and the potatoes ready for the table.

The officers were furious, and went out to find

the culprits. They were found, and a part of the ham and potatoes also. Both got a terrible lashing, enough to take all the manhood out of them.

When this was told me as their supper was served, I asked why the men had been punished. They all had license to do as they pleased. Many dinners had been taken from the stoves that day in Suwalki. "But not where *die Herrn Offiziere* are!" *There* was the whole story. *We* did not exist—therefore no one could be punished for what they might do to harm us!

During that supper, it seemed as if all the officers in Suwalki came to say good-evening. I would hardly get one samovar emptied and go to the children than they would ask for another, at the same time expressing sorrow for my trouble, and saying the officers wished to meet the American lady,—and I dared not refuse! It was possible to avoid giving my hand in greeting because of the sick child. How miserable to be so torn asunder! To be kept there with those men when my baby needed me every minute, but what was there to do? *C'est la Guerre*, as all the Germans

remarked in exceedingly bad French. One of the officers who came was evidently a very great personage. They paid him such deferential respect. He looked just like an Englishman. I told him so and he said his mother was an English woman—seemingly taking great pleasure in my remark, going on, however, to say the stain could only be washed from his blood by the shedding of much English blood! I shivered to hear the awful things he said; about having fought since the beginning of the war on the west front where he had many to his account; how, when the affair with the Russians was settled, and a peace made, he was going to England to call on his cousins, with not less than a hundred lives to the credit of his good sabre! It made me ill to hear him talk. In their power, one loses the vision of freedom or right; they filled the horizon; it is very difficult not to lose courage and hope. I *did* ask if there were no one else to take into consideration.

"Who?"

"Just God!"

"God stands on the side of the German weapons!"

That night was worse than the first, the forage-

wagons had come! The drinking began. After I had served many samovars of tea, if you could call it so, half a cup of rum and a little tea, in and out, in and out from the children to the table, the officer whose mother's blood he wished to wash away, had sufficient decency to say I was tired and should be left undisturbedly with the children. That second night was as the first, only Staś also began to rave, talking in that curious dragging, almost lilting, tone,—one who has heard does not forget that dread sign!

Going from one little bed to the other, placing compresses, wetting the lips so cruelly dry, changing the sheets,—while in the next room those men caroused! It was only God's mercy kept me sane. Afraid to put on a dressing-gown I remained as I was.

About five o'clock there was a great rushing about. Fresh troops were ordered to Augustowo. Many from our house were leaving. The staff remained, but my acquaintance of the night before was off. He came at that hour to wish me good-bye, showing me the picture of his wife and little daughter, telling me how "brilliantly" the child was

going through the teething process! A gallant figure he was, mounted on a beautiful horse, as I looked out of the window, thinking sadly what those new troops meant.

That morning a Jew came to tell me he had some bread. By paying him well he gave me quite a quantity. Our supplies were getting low. The officers' mess had come, which served them with meat—but there was still much for me to provide, and it was only the third day!

The house was much quieter that morning, so that the sound of the little voices carried into the sitting-room. Every once in awhile Staś would shriek horribly, frightening me even more; but as a rule, during the day, they lay, constantly moving hands and head, talking incessantly, not recognizing me, and not sleeping. I should have given them milk, but there was none,—the only thing I had was tea or coffee—both rapidly disappearing.

The weather was very bad, snowing, the icy kind, which hurts one's face; it seemed to fit in with the other misery.

The officers were gay at dinner. They told

me that day about the amiable project to surround Great Britain with submarines, that no atom of food might reach her shores. How in a few days the blockade was to begin, every ship was to be torpedoed! England through starvation was to be brought to her knees, the Germans were to be the lords of the universe, etc., etc. What a picture was drawn for me! Hard to keep one's balance and think the other side would also have a word to say in such a matter, not sitting idly by while the Germans put the world into their idea of order!

Shortly after dinner they all went away, leaving only the orderlies, to watch things. The two belonging to the Captain were very unpleasant. I could not bear them about, especially Max. Fritz was brutal and stupid—Max was cruel and not stupid! About my usual work, and trying to amuse Wanda girl, we all suddenly stopped still, breathless at sounds from the street! Wanda cried out:

"Oh, Mammy, *our* soldiers have come back—I hear their voices."

Yes, they had come back,—but how! The

street was full of them, thousands, driven along like dogs, taunted, beaten, if they fell down, kicked until they either got up or lay forever still; hungry, exhausted by the long retreat and the terrible battle. I could have screamed aloud at what was enacted before my eyes, but there was my poor little girlie to quiet; she cried so bitterly. I told her she should carry bread to the Russians. My cook brought the bread cut up in chunks. I told her to go down to the mounting block with Wanda, thinking surely a little delicate child would be respected, and the surest means of getting the bread into the prisoners' hands. It seemed to me if I could not help some of those men I should go mad. Leaving the nurse with my sons, I went to the balcony, seeing many familiar faces in the company of misery. When Wanda and the cook reached the block, there was a wild rush for the bread; trembling hands reached out, only to be beaten down. One German took a piece from my little girl's hands, broke off little bits, throwing them into the air to see those starving men snatch at them and then hunt in the mud. Finally one Christian among them

gave the cook assistance; the bread was getting to the men, only we had so little. Then something so terrible happened that while I live it can never be blotted from my memory. Wanda —my little tender, sensitive child, had a chunk of bread in her hand, in the act of reaching it to a prisoner, when Max, the Captain's orderly came up. Taking the bread from her hand he threw it in the mud, stamping on it! The poor hungry prisoner with a whimpering cry, stooped down, wildly searching, when Max raised his foot, and kicked him violently in the mouth! Wanda screamed: "Don't hurt Wanda's soldier!" The blood spurted all over her!

Rushing down-stairs I gathered my poor little girlie into my arms, her whole little body quivering with sobs, and faced the brute, which had done the deed.

"What religion are you, Max?"

"Roman Catholic."

"Then I hope the Mother of God will not pray for you when you die, for you have offended one of God's little ones."

The soldier with bleeding mouth was lying on

the side of the road; my cook tried to help him, but was roughly driven away.

Carrying Wanda up stairs, trying to still her; heart-broken myself, what could I tell the little creature? Suddenly she asked:

"Mammy—why does God sleep?"

"God is not asleep, darling——"

"Then Wanda don't love God when He lets the soldiers be hurt and kicked!"

"God sees all and loves all—but the bad man gets into the hearts of some of His children——"

Difficult it was to do anything when I came back into that room where my little sons lay raving, not to just sit down and nurse my girlie, six years old, to have seen such sights! While attending the boys, another scream from Wanda took me to the window. No wonder she screamed! The captured guns were being brought into the town with the Russians *hitched* to them, driven with blows through the icy slush of the streets, while *the horses were led along beside them!* Wanda cried so hysterically, that she had to have bromide; the child was ill. Surely there was nothing worse to come?

The Captain, hearing the sounds and wanting his supper, came into the room.

"Go away, Captain, if you are a man, and leave me alone with my babies."

"What is the trouble? Is the little girl ill also?"

"Have you seen what is happening with the Russian soldiers, taken prisoners?"

"Yes, I have seen."

I told him what his orderly, Max, had done. He slowly, gravely answered:

"Yes, that is bad."

"Where are all those prisoners?"

"In the churches."

Then he said, "Do not show so much sympathy —it will only do you harm and help no one. A great man will be quartered here tomorrow. Do not let him see you like this; some day when the children are well you will wish to get away from here."

"But the Russians will have retaken Suwalki long before that day, and my husband will be here."

"Never, and never, not while there is a German soldier! Now, be brave and smile, and I will help you as lays in my power."

But that evening I was not "begged" (?) to serve tea! What a night it was. My boys were so ill, and I could not pray that God save them for me. I dare not! God knows, I had come to a stone wall. It was not even possible to feel that somewhere my husband was alive. We were cut off from the living.

CHAPTER XVI

THE OCCUPATION

THE next day, Friday, the Great Man was quartered on us, the staff officers finding some place else to sleep, coming only to meals. Much food also made its appearance, so my couchfuls were still fairly undisturbed. I had hoped to be let alone, that it would not be necessary to serve; but I was not allowed that luxury. It was necessary to serve coffee, and look pleased with doing so. After the meal, I showed the workings of the samovar to the detestable Max and left. The Great Man paid little attention to me except to greet me courteously. I could have done with less courtesy if he had given different orders to the army. All the misery, the awful orders, came from him, the *Shrecklichkeit* we were face to face with. By his orders, the prisoners were cruelly deprived of food, and the levies were laid upon the people.

I do not think soldiers meant anything to him as men, they were simply creatures of his will, to serve his ends. It is said that all great men are egoists,—this one certainly was. We were so absolutely in this man's power, and he was ruthless!

When a man's personality weighs down those about him with a hopeless depression, in Poland they say, "he sits on my head." It is a wonderfully expressive phrase. The Great Man "sat on my head" very heavily. He drank copiously (in fact, I have never seen such a capacity for *Schnapps*), ate tremendously, and the only topic of conversation was what he had done or was about to do.

My house was only to be used a day or so. There were other quarters being arranged.

Saturday a strange piece of news came to my ears. The officer with the English mother, after having been two days in battle at Augustowo—hand to hand engagements—and most desperate fighting—was at mess with the other officers in a peasant's hut. Called to the telephone he had scarcely picked up the receiver when a shell from the Russians, one of the few they sent that day,

burst near the hut. A piece came through the roof, instantly killing the man who had been so sure God was an interchangeable word with Kaiser! When the news was told me it seemed like a rebuke. That man appeared to be so mighty, backed by an invincible force, but when God said enough, how quickly was he still!

The days went by without rest for me. I was a machine—night after night with my patients—how pitiful they looked—little grey shadows of my darling boys. They never stopped talking—only the voices grew weaker—each night meant a battle with death. I used to stand over them and say, "Dearies, you *must* not leave your Mamusia—you *must* get well--your father *must* have his boys!"

From half-past three until five it was impossible to count the pulse. I could only pour a few drops of black coffee into the little mouths so hideously disfigured by typhus sores. Near this dreadful disease lay my little daughter,—nervous, hardly speaking at all. She was not the same child. We spoke together of "Tatuś" when I had time. She had escaped so far, but, breathing the same air

with them, how could she escape the typhus, despite all my care in disinfecting.

The Great Man went and I was heartily grateful, for his atmosphere of inexorable power to crush us was almost too much to bear. It was as if a black cloud had been cleared from our horizon; though we still felt the effect of the orders given to the army, still we did not have to look at him or serve him with coffee. During the few days he was under my roof, many delicate dishes had appeared upon my table, but no one had asked me if I had the *necessary food* to give my children. The Great Man was served from a "Feld Küche" with the more substantial dishes, and I had to provide an entreé or two. One day the food in the "Feld Küche" went sour, and I had to manage the whole meal.

No wonder I was glad that the "Colossus" went—whenever I looked at him I seemed to hear bones being cracked and ground into powder. No tiny detail, nothing which could make the townspeople suffer was too insignificant to be turned into an order and signed by the Great Man. In fact, he brought so much "*Kultur*"

into Poland that the Poles were almost exterminated by it. We were not the only ones who felt the weight of his fist. The German soldiers were treated with extreme severity, though given the greatest license to harm and fill the unfortunate townspeople with fear. It did no good to complain of any outrage—for outrage was ordered and encouraged and rewarded. The soldiers were forbidden to show sympathy. One curious thing—the soldiers had all sorts of articles stamped with the Great Man's picture—I asked one of the orderlies if he felt it was quite the thing to use a handkerchief so decorated! The man told me "perhaps not," but that he thoroughly agreed with his suspenders! Bright red, these were, bearing a tiny picture of the Great Man, and, of course "*Gott strafe England*" embroidered upon them in flowing German script. That legend seemed to grow upon everything the soldiers used.

On the last day that the Great Man was with us, another Great Personage was also there—a fat, beery scion of royalty, neither clever nor interesting. The change in this young man's appearance

was a distinct shock. As a girl I had often seen him in Berlin with his father or with some of his brothers or others of the family and at that time his extreme popularity (he was very much the people's favourite) seemed easily explained by his good looks and his charming manners. I know these made, from a distance, a greatly favourable impression upon me. And now—such a change! Was it due to *"Kultur"?*

The gruff but kind Captain also received the order for Augustowo; night and day there were the sounds of battle; the immediate needs and misery were too great to pay much attention. The last day those officers were in the house I went one more step on the *via dolorosa.* It was Sunday morning; the prisoners had been removed from the Roman Catholic Church. There were services going on, so the townspeople had for the first time appeared upon the streets. A foolish, talkative little woman, who had remained with her husband and little daughter, came to see me on her way from early mass. I was dreading to leave the children long enough to serve coffee to the officers, so I asked this woman to sit with the

children while I had to leave the room. When opening the door she said to me:

"They say the Russians are in Marjampol—and the Russian chief of police never left—he is here——"

I told her sharply to be still. She answered the Germans did not understand Polish. When I went into the next room, right near the door the medical student "doctor" was sitting. He always hung about. I really paid no attention to what the woman had said, but after having served coffee I had barely returned to the children when my cook burst in calling out jubilantly the same piece of news. She was also told to hush (the doctor still sat near the door reading), but as if two of them were not enough, the nurse girl, Stephania, also came in telling instantly the same story with more details; and the three, in spite of all I could do, would discuss it.

At dinner-time, two o'clock, the officers had finished eating and drinking,—they were about to drink black coffee—when an orderly called the Captain. In a few moments he returned, looking very grave, and told me there was somebody to see

me from the secret police; he advised perfect frankness. I almost died of fright, seeing fortresses and dungeons of all sorts looming up before my eyes!

A horrid, degenerate-looking man—this secret agent—who instantly told me the police knew I was a Russian sympathizer, and that I had a centre of information in my house, that I fed the prisoners, and rebuked the German soldiers for carrying out the orders issued to the army; that I incited the public to resistance, and was to be removed as a menace to the army, to Germany; that he was sent to fetch me. I told him that what he said was mostly untrue, and the rest misrepresented; that the people in the town naturally looked up to and trusted me; I could not help their coming,—there was little time I gave to anybody. I had given bread to the captured Russian soldiers, but when the Russians were here, the captive Germans had also received help from me.

The secret agent said, well, I had "something to my credit," immediately giving in detail the conversation of those women; but I told him that was the gossip of the town. "So much the worse"

—it did no good to tell him I did not allow them to talk—the order had gone out. I was to be removed! No use to tell him of the children either; that they were at the point of death. He simply said that this did not interest the Government; only the fact that I was hostile, and arousing the sympathy of the people at this moment. I heard the Captain clanking heavily about in the next room, and, in my distress, called to him. Big, burly, with a look of contempt at the "Agent" in his civilian clothes, the Captain came in.

When I had told him the secret police wished to take me to a fortress, and the reasons, how my children were to die, as they surely would without my care, he flew into a terrible rage, and ordered the man out, saying he gave his word for me, that as a man and an officer he would permit no such thing. With that, he took hold of the Agent marching him into the room where my boys lay.

"There,—look! And go tell the secret police what you have seen."

The man disappeared with alacrity; no more was heard of him!

The Captain stood leaning on my boy's bed, shaking his head.

"It is such nonsense makes us so hated,—just as in Belgium! But—I told you not to show your sympathy."

I reached out my hand.

"Captain, there may be typhus germs on my hand, but there are also the thanks and blessing of a mother whose life you have saved!"

Somehow things took a different colour after that terrible experience. I knew then that there were still worse things than I had to endure. The Captain told me he would get the *Ober-Kommando* to occupy my house—as someone must—and his regiment was leaving the next morning.

The Russians had made an advance and excitement prevailed. Hope sprang up once more.

That night Wladek took a terrible turn. Two fingers were paining him, typhus sores,—and no doctor! I used everything to allay the fever, but the crisis was near.

The Captain with his men left before dawn. When they went, the medical student came to say good-bye—in Polish! I told him I hoped he was

satisfied with his noble work! Four officers from the *Ober-Kommando* took up quarters with us. I told them there was no more food. I had only macaroni, zwieback, and a few jars of strawberry and raspberry preserves—no potatoes, and about a half-pound of coffee and tea.

The children were so near death that day that I went from one to the other, changing compresses, wetting the lips with weak tea (made of melted snow water—the wells were not possible), imploring them not to leave me. One of the new officers told me there was a celebrated doctor in Suwalki that day. Did I not wish to see him? How I blessed the man for his thought. In a short time the doctor came. Of course he only looked at the children when he said:

"Typhus,—and one near the crisis," that very soon the finger would have to be operated upon, also that the military could not be quartered in the house. I would at least be alone. The nurse, Stephania, had never come back after the secret police got after her, so that day I called Jacob's daughter, Manya, into service in the sick room.

When the officers had gone I found all our stores

of wood had been burned; coal had long since been out of question. It was cold in that great empty place, filled no longer with the memory of happy days. The night got over somehow, but in the morning it was evident that Wladek's finger must be operated upon. His hand was black, his arm swollen. I sent a note to the Commandant asking for a doctor, adding that a few hours' delay would mean death! The cook brought a reply saying that a doctor would be sent. I prepared a table with everything ready to operate, and waited . . . until nine o'clock in the evening. I meant to operate myself if the doctor did not come. When the doctor did come I was face to face with the living example of "*Schrecklichkeit!*" He said:

"Good-evening. My fee is thirty marks! Gold!"

I told him it was difficult to give him so much, the contribution of the town had fallen so heavily upon me. He simply said that, without the gold, he would not operate, so my boy's finger had to wait while the money was fetched. After the fee had been pocketed, I gave him an apron, and he went in to look at the children, saying immediately

he thought both would die. He asked me what I had done, said it was right, and walked back to the operating table. I carried Wladek out,—with no difficulty for he was like a shadow. Hardly was I seated when with a flourish of the surgical scissors, —I shall never forget it—the surgeon grabbed hold of Wladek's finger, and, without even disinfecting it, or using the ether, which stood on the table, snipped it off like a bit of old cloth. The blood and matter spurted all over me—Wladek screamed, and then was still. The doctor got up, saying that I would know how to disinfect and bandage the wound. I begged him to stop and help me. Replying only, "I have no time," he walked out, leaving me alone with my unconscious boy. It was very difficult to manage the cruelly used finger, and to hold the child at the same time. I could not feel his heart beat. Staś, in the other room, was crying,—and neither the cook nor Manya came.

The hand was finally bandaged and a compress laid on to keep it moist. After making every effort, I finally managed to rouse him, so that the poor little fellow began to moan. On carrying him back to bed, I found his brother lying fainting on the

floor! The wonderful sympathy between the twins had caused Staś, even in delirium of fever, to wish to go to his brother's aid, and I had two unconscious, still boys. The room was freezing cold!

After they were once more in bed covered with everything to be found, I threw myself down in the big chair to watch them. Catching a glimpse of the mirror, I wondered who that wild, white, strange-looking woman was—after a time recognizing myself! Then, by a mighty effort of the will I drew back from the black pit of despair, saying over and over again, "I will call upon God, —and the Lord shall save me!" until I could once more get up and go about preparing things for the night. That night when it was to be decided life or death for Wladek! How still it was—I was glad when the boys simultaneously began to rave. I at least knew then they were alive! The big guns sounded far off. I was quite alone. The cook was not in the kitchen—Manya did not come when I rang, nor did Jacob.

A long time afterward my cook came. She had difficulty in controlling herself, but finally made

me understand. The doctor had taken Manya—not yet seventeen! God help her!

Jacob came in looking like a hurt animal. He had been struck in the mouth by the doctor. The blood dripped on his hands together with his tears. Manya was his pride, his little girl. She knew how to read—he began to tell me little stories of her childhood, "before my lady was in Poland!"

I gave him a double dose of veronal, washing his wounded nose and mouth, and promising we should get Manya back tomorrow.

"Tomorrow!" with a cry like an animal. Quieting down once more, he crawled into a corner by the stove, instantly sleeping,—worn out. An example of the freedom and happiness the *Kultur träger* had brought to us in Poland!

That night Wladek fell asleep. I feared to breathe—suddenly he grew icy cold. I put hot cloths on him, gave him spoonfuls of black coffee. Tried to count the pulse—so faint—wildly calling on God to save him! The dear eyes opened. He tried to say "*Mamusia*," and slept! Saved! The twenty-first day since he last knew his mother. I laid my head on his bed, weeping until there were

no more tears left, and also slept—to be wakened by a cry from Staś who was still talking, moving head and hands as if automatically. A curious feeling came over me. I did not wish to move; as in a dream—everything was so far off; the room grew very warm—like summer.

CHAPTER XVII

TYPHUS!

When the cook came at five o'clock to sit with the children while I rested, she found me for the first time in all those days not dressed in my uniform, but wearing a thin kimono, and saying how warm it was. She was frightened. It was so difficult for me to speak. My tongue would not obey me, but I made her understand that Wladek was better—saved—and that for Staś the crisis would likely come that night. The poor creature began to cry, saying, "Oh, my lady, you also are ill with the fever!"

That I could not agree to. There was no time for me to be ill. We spoke of the need of fuel. A Jew had some wood and wanted fifty roubles for it. Another had a few potatoes. These things were sorely needed. But no milk! For Wladek it was so absolutely necessary. There was still a ten-

pound package of sugar. Wladek was conscious, too weak to speak, pitiful beyond measure. I tried to force myself to have energy enough to dress his hand,—succeeding after a terrible effort. Staś was calling out, talking wildly as usual. For my little daughter the problem of food faced me. What to give her! She was always difficult to please with food—and now would hardly touch our fare.

The day wore away. Late in the afternoon the doctor came. I had quite forgotten about Manya.

"You have also the typhus!"

In a voice that seemed to belong to some one else, I told him, "No—I have no time for the typhus, the children would die if I gave up," and refused to go to bed.

That night the fever laid its hand heavily upon me, and I went to bed. My cook told me afterwards how I sang what she called "church music" till she thought the end was near—that already the angels were there!

Seemingly a hundred years after, in reality a few hours, it was borne in upon my consciousness by a pure mother instinct undoubtedly, that some

one was crying. I opened my eyes to see the cook bending over Staś, crying, "if my lady would only wake up, and tell me what to do!"

I forced my voice back from the far-away country, telling her to put Staś beside me, compresses also, that I could attend him, and, with God's help, I did; after awhile getting to my feet, keeping always a tight hold of my senses, lest they wander. The very overpowering anxiety for my children cast the fever off!

Staś lived through the crisis that night, just as Wladek had done. I sat in the big chair between the little cribs, telling the cook what to do.

For two days it was difficult to drag about. It was as if I had never rested or sat down in my life.

The second day when the doctor came, there suddenly flashed across my mind the story of Manya, and I asked him where she was. He told me it was "not my affair." Wladek's second finger had to have an operation, but knowing the tender methods of the doctor, I bathed it in ether myself.

Wladek was hungry,—like a wolf. I gave him the juice of my strawberry preserves. The hunger

of the boys grew so alarmingly, and I had only the tea, toast, and preserves, not a diet for typhus patients. The Jew had sold his potatoes to some one else.

Four days after Manya's disappearance, news was brought to me that she was in the house of an old Jewess, a cigarette maker. Leaving the cook with the children, and hardly able to drag myself along, I went with Jacob to find his daughter. How strange it was in the streets, the soldiers were everywhere, staring curiously at us. Impossibly dirty, it bore no resemblance to the town I had known; bits of furniture were standing about, all sorts of things spilled over the streets.

After many difficulties, we finally found the place, and paying no attention to the soldiers about, pushed our way into the room where Manya was, . . . what *had been* Manya. When she, poor creature, saw us, she threw herself on the floor, sobbing; springing up when I knelt beside her. An officer came in to ask our business with the girl.

"She is my maid—stolen! This is her father. I have come to take her home."

"I am very sorry, but you are not allowed to take her, she belongs to the soldiers."

"Don't you see *Herr Offizier*, the girl is dying?"

"Ill she is, and shall have the best of care. We have a doctor to attend just such cases," and *I had to leave her!* Jacob's face was without expression, he seemed to have lost the power to think or feel,—his little girl——

Not long after that, when things were at their very worst in the matter of food, an officer walked into the room where I was busy with the children, a doctor of the sanitary service, of Polish blood! Oh! how glad I was to see him, and how kind he was examining into all the details, not only of the children's health, but how we lived, I also told him of the brutal doctor. That afternoon this good doctor, *Sanitats Rat*, sent me a loaf of bread and four eggs! Nothing I have ever seen, no jewels, were ever so precious in my eyes as that *white* bread and eggs, for in the town the food had all been taken, and there was none to buy!

About this time, the terrible contribution was laid on Suwalki in answer to Memel, which the Russians had taken. Two hundred thousand

marks to be raised by those poor people! The guns were in front of the church. The town was to be blown into the air unless this great sum was paid by a certain day. I saw how they took the Russian priest and the Jewish rabbi (one of the Roman Catholic priests had long since been taken) to keep as hostages, yanking them along the street by a rope. The soldiers were amusing themselves.

In and out of the houses those levying officers went, taking the very blood, one might say, from the people. I was told after my hunt for Manya, to keep at home. Jacob had disappeared,—carried off to dig in the trenches. Those were fearsome times! After paying my large share of the contribution, also giving up my jewels, it seemed as if when food would be there to purchase, at the existing prices, I should soon be without money. The good doctor had tried to get help for me. There were a number of the Russian Red Cross Sisters captured with the army and held in Suwalki, but they were not allowed to come; though for six weeks I had been nursing my boys, and struggling with the fever myself.

I complained about Manya, and was promised

that the case should be taken up, "made an example of." So it was! The old Jewess, though quite innocent in the matter, was arrested, kept five days on bread and water (what the rest of the town lived on, too!) and made to pay a fine of three hundred marks! How the case was made out was difficult to imagine. When I told them the old Jewess had done nothing, that she was simply turned out of her own home, I was told that the doctor could not be even questioned, he belonged to the military, but that a Jew *could always be punished!*

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CHILDREN RECOVER

My boys grew slowly better, through the period where they continually slept, on to the point where they cried with hunger. Sometimes I was able to buy a little food—if there was any in the town my cook was sure to find it. I doled the toasted bread and preserves out with a miserly hand. Our sugar was gone, coffee also, but I still had tea.

We were deserted. No one came near us, except the good doctor. He came, and so I kept in touch with the world. Also there was the never ceasing panorama before my windows. The automobiles were stationed there. Many a time they were already for flight, the Russians making an advance, only to be pushed back. We, in the town, never gave up hope.

Great numbers of prisoners were kept in Suwalki,

starving to death! The wounded were crowded together without comfort or cleanliness, and the townspeople "allowed" to feed them. They who had nothing themselves!

I was afraid to help openly for a time, but my cook carried pails of soup (macaroni) to the hospital, where the wounded lay upon the floor, without straw in the intense cold. One day she told me something was happening. The prisoners' hospital was being cleaned, beds put in, and even clean linen for the men. Just after she told me this the doctor came, our kind friend. I asked him why the sudden change, and heard to my delight that *attachés* from the neutral countries were to make a visit. In some way it had leaked out how the prisoners were being treated, and an investigation was to be made. I immediately wrote a petition that I should be allowed to see the American *attaché*, thinking in this way to get word to my husband, letting him know we were still alive. The interview was promised me on the condition that I would speak only of the question of communication with my husband and not a word about what I had seen in Suwalki.

Such a cleaning there was those three days we were expecting the important visitors. The prisoners were fed. Those in the hospital got cocoa, very satisfying to an empty stomach!

I was unquiet over Wanda, seeing her wilt before my eyes like a little flower, but the prospect of getting some word to my husband, made me feel brighter than usual.

The *attachés* came, saw what ideal conditions prevailed in Suwalki (for at least *three days!*) and went! I was not permitted to see the American *attaché*, and was only told it was not considered expedient that I should.

That night Wanda developed the typhus, and for the second time during my captivity I cried until there were no more tears left. Again, the old miserable story to go through with, the watching by night and by day. Wanda had quite a different form of the fever. After a few hours of the sing-song delirious talking, she grew silent, and never spoke nor opened her eyes, unless I made her, for fourteen days. The only way I knew she lived, by looking at her, was by the faint red patches on her cheeks. The crisis past, she recovered more

rapidly than her brothers. Also there was milk to be had! I was able to get two quarts a day, but it cost one rouble. A Jew somehow had got two cows. The precious fluid was taken away from my cook by soldiers so many times, even though she made them understand it was for typhus patients, that I had to get a special permit to carry milk unmolested through the streets. Once my cook found a chicken! It also was taken from her. She cried and called down such vengeance upon the thieves, the soldiers of the army of occupation, that I told her she would be shot if they understood what she said. Not long after a Jew brought me *five chickens*. Five roubles apiece! If I could keep them they meant eggs for the children. So I had them shut up in what had been our beautiful library. They roosted on the pretty old shelves, clawed over the books, and I did not care or have any feeling about it. Those things were finished, passed out of my life.

After that we were able to buy more food. Potatoes were to be had at a ruinous price, and also wood. There came a day when Wladek got up out of bed. Grown so tall, with legs like a pencil,

he bore no resemblance to my bonny boy. And hungry! The toast was finished, but Wladek could eat mashed potatoes. How he begged for all sorts of things.

A few days after his twin brother also rose from the dead, and because nothing could come singly, something happened! It was Holy Week. A tremendous battle was on, the big guns almost cracked the windows, we could also hear the machine guns. In the midst of the din I was rejoicing over my sons, that they had taken a step; when several people walked into the room—Russians, the first I had seen to speak to. A doctor and three sisters, with four German soldiers. How pleasant it was to see some one not a German! The doctor, a splendid man, but with his misery stamped upon his face, told me he had been sent to open a "typhus hospital" in my house! The disease was all over the town, and now it was to be centred under my roof. I asked him what I should do. The Germans had told him *I* was to provide beds, etc! The German soldiers grew impatient that we only talked and did nothing, and began to threaten. I gave them cigarettes, which I had had

for the Russian soldiers, and asked them to leave us alone for a while.

The doctor suggested as my children were better to offer the lower floor as a military hospital, saying I did not wish the civilians so near, they would bring more diseases. He advised me to beg that the Russian hospital be there, giving as reason that I belonged to the Red Cross and would like to work in the hospital, but could not go far. So we decided.

The doctor told me a little of his life. They would have also starved, only a man who had a restaurant begged to feed the doctor and three nurses. At least they had some sort of a dinner every day; but what indignities they suffered upon the street! Our conversation was not a long one, for the soldiers finished their cigarettes and came pounding across the floor. One laid his hand on the doctor's shoulders, and turned him rudely about. "Come then. See what you dirty Russians have done," was the soldier's mode of address, leading the way to the unused part of our house.

The next morning a party of prisoners were sent to clean. Six starving human beings! I told

my cook to make soup with a few of our precious potatoes and much macaroni—useless for the children, so heavy and rubbery it was! Taking a lot of cigarettes I went to interview the soldiers on guard. The Russians came about me when they saw "a Sister," but were driven—not gently—back to work.

I asked the soldier, giving him at the same time a handful of cigarettes, if I were permitted to give the prisoners something to eat? He agreed readily enough, saying he saw no reason why the men should be kept without food, but he could only allow them five minutes to eat, as they were so slow. How could they be anything else so long without food!

I told the prisoners they should have hot soup; the look in their eyes when they heard this! While the soup was cooking I wrote my petition that the military hospital be in my house, giving as grounds my fear that the civilian population would bring not only typhus with them; begging to be allowed to help! How long that soup took to cook! I had a picture before my eyes of those men waiting.

The children already tried to amuse themselves,

sitting propped up with cushions, in the deep windows, watching the streams of soldiers, wagons, guns, and wounded. The battle was terrific. A hope sprang up that the Russians would be in for Easter.

Begging the children to stop alone just one moment while the cook carried the pot of soup to the Russian soldiers, I went down with her, to talk to the German on guard.

The cook had a trite reception "*Hinaus!*" (Get out!) The man was polite enough to me, and called the Russians. I had fetched four dishes and ladled out a portion for each, begging them to eat slowly. One of them spoke softly to me in English; he had been in America! I told him they were to eat slowly and sit on the floor to rest themselves, giving them cigarettes and a box of matches, and turned my attention to the German. At first he only wished to speak of the dirtiness of the prisoners; when I asked "if they were given facilities to be clean." He said, "No, but if they wished to be clean they could be." A difficult matter without soap or water, comb or brush! Clothes and linen worn night and day since they were taken captive!

Soon the man got away from the favourite topic of conversation because I asked him if he had a family. He had in Memel—and how pathetic he was on the subject, when speaking of his wife alone there and his small children, but he could not see the point when I told him he should show consideration and help the unfortunate prisoners. For himself and the Germans, he was very sorry; but for the Russians he had only a curse or a kick. He grew so excited talking to me, defending the policy of "frightfulness" that the Russian prisoners had ample time to finish and smoke the cigarettes. They had all eaten too much for starving men. The copper was empty—I had thought they would carry home half in their little tin pails. The soldier who spoke English told me it was the first warm food he had eaten since December when he was taken prisoner at the battle of Warsaw—since then not even hot tea! Sometimes they got chunks of black bread.

We did not get the typhus hospital, but Saturday of Holy Week I was given permission to feed two parties of prisoners daily, a party consisting of twenty-one men. I did not see how it was to be

done, but gladly took the permission. As a Sister, I was allowed to help the men, if they were brought to me. Near our house a number of prisoners were to be employed, also cleaning the streets.

Easter was truly a rising from the dead. Wanda girl got up on her feet, white and weak, but the worst was past, and I could once more count one, two, three little heads. We had hoped the Russians would be back for Easter, but instead great reinforcements arrived for the Germans.

The typhus signs protected me from the military, but the rest of the town was overrun.

On Easter afternoon I had two visitors, one of our priests, and a German General who had been quartered in my house. The General said it was very tiresome in Suwalki so he thought he would come to see how we were getting along, if the quarantine was soon to be raised so the good quarters could once more be occupied. The Polish priest and German General spoke of my affairs together, and as a result of my visitors' conversation I wrote my first petition to be allowed to leave Suwalki. With every day life grew more difficult for me. The children were ravenous, and needed

delicate, nourishing food, not only potatoes and milk, of which there was not always two quarts, though paid for. Black bread cost enormously, but occasionally was to be had, the Jews demanding as much as three roubles a loaf! This bread could not be given to typhus patients, as much as the children begged for it. Once I saw a soldier on the street eating an orange—biting into it as if an orange was quite ordinary fare in Suwalki —I would have given anything under the sun to get that orange for the children, but had to be glad they were warm and had milk and potatoes. Every day there was the excitement of feeding the two parties of prisoners; once there was nothing but soup made of meal, and a very old and dry ham bone! To make so much soup with one small bone! The prisoners found it good, hot at least. The Jews knew I was feeding prisoners and so brought anything they could get to me, knowing they would be paid—the Germans taking things without the ceremony of paying!

CHAPTER XIX

THE PRISONERS

From this time I was nearer to the life of the town. Every moment was occupied or I should have gone mad! I knew my husband must have been outside, beyond the trenches, for the Russians were only five and a half miles away. They held Sejny and Kalvarya.

A German soldier came into the kitchen one day. My cook, not understanding what he wanted, begged me to speak with him. He wished to sit awhile and drink tea. I told him he might have tea if he had it himself; we would give him hot water. He wished to talk to some one, and showed me pictures of wife and child. How full of desire for sympathy they always were, but never had any to spare for other people! This soldier told me that in two hours time he was going to the trenches to pump fire on the Russians; told how

he could make the liquid fire spring sixty-five feet! How it burned all it touched to cinders, spreading on all sides. I had to listen, fascinated by the horror of it!

The Russians were making tremendous efforts to re-enter Suwalki, the Germans just as great ones to keep them out, for it was the gateway to East Prussia. That word! I tried not to hate anything, but even to hear East Prussia mentioned aroused something akin to that feeling in me. East Prussia was their slogan, the stick to beat the Poles with, to stamp them into the earth! Every woman outraged, if she were not fortunate enough to take her own life, was caged up "for the soldiers." Furniture was carted daily to East Prussia, the woods were cut down, every agricultural implement taken! All for the same reason; what a maw it is that East Prussia! All Poland was to be emptied and carted away, beaten into the bargain, and made to pay such terrible contributions!

The peasants' grain was taken when the Germans first came, no seed grain nor potatoes left, and now the Commandant notified all who had ground, to cultivate it, and that seed grain could

be had for twenty-five marks a measure. The use of a horse two marks a day—no matter to whom the horse belonged! After the ground was sown all horses were to be removed by the military. Any one not buying grain and industriously cultivating the land was to be evicted, the military taking possession. Poor people! Those who could scrape the money together somehow, did; but there were many driven away from their bits of ground, the thing they tied to. And thus were forced to join the fast increasing beggar population. The others patiently bought back their own grain, labouring unceasingly with the fear of being driven away ever before their eyes.

A soup kitchen was opened by our committee, ostensibly. True, the town had to get all food somehow; but the law did not lie in our hands. Also from there the food for the wounded was taken,—men with terrible wounds, or typhus, fed on pea soup! Such peas, which if they were cooked a month, were still like little glass marbles rolling about.

One day I had a visitor. Some one whose face was familiar—a Pole and a nobleman. An ac-

quaintance, one of the civil engineers belonging to my husband's department. He had been caught with three other Poles—they were with the retreating army—having left Suwalki too late. His horses naturally were taken, boxes and everything in the wagon; and all this time he had been kept in a cellar on occasional chunks of bread. No wonder he was changed beyond recognition. He said he was so anxious about us he had to come to enquire, though not good for me. He was "suspected" and harried continually,—the man looked on the verge of insanity. The same man who fed the Russian doctor and sisters was feeding him. I insisted on giving him money and what cigarettes still remained,—he was so pitiful—an example of what the Prussians' idea of "free" Poland is!

Not long after this I had another visitor, Pan W., a man who stood out before the war as a very rich Pole, a nobleman, who because he was deformed thought he might remain without question on his estates, two very large modern ones near Suwalki. His wife and two daughters were in Warsaw, his two young sons, fourteen and

fifteen, with him. Pan W. found his deformity did not protect him; for, when the *Kultur träger* came, they instantly accused him of having telephonic communication with the Russians and bound the unfortunate man in his own cellar together with his young sons. The military occupied the palace, taking everything out of it for East Prussia. All stock, farm implements, automobiles, all had disappeared, when six weeks afterwards Pan W. and his sons were released from the cellar. He was asked by the commanding officer which he preferred, "German or Russian rule?" Pan W. replied, not daring to answer frankly, that "the Russians had never imprisoned him!" For this answer he was given another month in the cellar! Then they were taken out and driven into Suwalki like animals, literally without a shirt to their backs. This treatment for a man, a nobleman universally respected, a man who had lived a luxurious life before the war. I found some of my husband's shirts, collars, and ties for this poor victim—but had no clothes for him. How glad he was. We drank tea together. I begged him to share our food daily. He could not

trust himself to speak of his wife and daughters, but told me of his sons. One had always been very delicate and spent the winters in Switzerland! Now without food except chunks of bread occasionally, and water; after being kept in a dark cellar so many weeks! The two boys were sent to work on a new railroad the Germans were completing. His voice rings in my ears, the pity of it; he told me of his hope that they would be paid something. He refused to take meals he could not pay for at the restaurant where many officers ate. He had asked the commandant to give him some money, a slight return for the enormous amount of stuff taken from his estate, amounting to much over a hundred thousand roubles. He had not even a paper to show those things had been taken. After great efforts a paper was given him payable by the *Russian Government*, for automobiles, farm machinery, etc., and *twenty marks from the Germans(!)* with a paper to sign freeing the Germans from further payment or responsibility, being told if he did not sign he would not get the twenty marks—but it would make no difference to the result!

Poor man! It was a difficult position, but the sounds of battle were near that day, giving him courage. Much the same thing had happened to a priest from an outlying village, one of the first in the path of the enemy. When they came on, the officer in command told the priest to feed his men and horses; that they would pay their way because the village was a poor one. The officer knew the peasants had brought their grains and fodder to the priest for safety (those Germans knew everything). The priest treated the officers most courteously, let them feed the horses with delight, thinking of the money for his poor parishioners; but, when the soldiers dug up the silver altar vessels and a jewelled cross, he protested. The commanding officer did not stop his men, but instead, gave the priest a paper to sign,—payment in full—*four marks!* Refusing to sign, the priest was driven in front of the soldiers to Suwalki, tried for resisting and insulting the military, and thrown into prison. Into a room with many others, men and women, mostly Jews! There were too many to lie down. In filth and horror they lived three weeks, two of the women giving birth

to children. Finally, the prison was put in order, the priest getting a cell with two other men, one of whom went mad and took his life. After that the priest was released, and allowed to go to the church house to live. I saw him once, and shall not readily forget his martyred face. He had grown to be like a saint of old. More than one priest grew a halo, they were so persecuted.

One day a German priest came walking into our rooms—florid, too well-fed—he was a contrast to the Polish priests. Having seen the children about—they had even been in the garden by this time—he decided to come to make acquaintance with their mother, whom he said he had also seen upon the street feeding the prisoners, giving me to understand in his opinion my energies were misdirected. He also asked me why I wore the Russian Red Cross uniform. I told him for three reasons. First that I was a member of the Red Cross; second, it protected me from the German soldiers who made a practice of insulting every woman; third, I had been ordered to wear it, as the Germans found me in uniform. He said he would get permission for me to wear "civil"

clothing. I thanked him saying it was better, that I was more comfortable in my sister's dress, and I felt it was a comfort to the prisoners. This German priest (how sorry I am not to give his name—it so exactly expresses the man! But *even he* eventually helped me—so I dare not be ungrateful!) made himself at home in our house. The children loathed him and were dreadfully naughty whenever he showed his face.

I knew he felt incensed at the unfriendly attitude of my little, still weak babies. My cook, too, had a severe strain put upon her religion, for, crossing herself violently, she would say she wished the father would not favour us with so much of his company,—and she *never left me alone.* After a while, this priest even stopped to meals—I could do nothing—he even followed me about when I was bathing the children and putting them to bed. In fact, he frightened me more than any other of the Germans. Speaking Polish he asked me about everybody and everything. One day telling me because he was refused something by our priest (something which was of course not there to give), he intended moving away from the church house,

and having it filled with common soldiers. In order to do this he took for his services the Russian church which had to have the filth dug out of it by the Russian prisoners.

Was it any wonder the town was full of sickness? Hunger and filth went hand in hand. When the prisoners were working in the church after a long, hard morning, driven by blows, kicked on the slightest provocation, as a part of the system, they were led out to sit in front of the church for a noon pause. I say advisedly "noon pause." Dinner-time it was not—*for they were given no food!* Dropping with fatigue, unhappy, dumb with misery! The townspeople were not allowed near them. Why, only the peculiar mental processes of the Prussian torturer knew! I could see them from the windows in the right wing of my house and to them carried food. I was using my money at a tremendous rate, assured that God would send more when the need came. The look of those men is burned, seared in, upon my mind. That sound of their voices when they saw us coming, for there was no one else but me to help my cook carry the pot of soup; then she left to take care of

the children, while I doled out whatever there was to those reaching, trembling hands. I, too, had grown to take the attitude of the people, nothing could melt their captors. It felt like trying to stay death and damnation,—inexorable. All I could do was to feed as many as possible. But now, here in America, the question often occurs to me, what will happen when the inevitable day of reckoning comes to those who gave such orders, who caused such fiendish suffering to come upon those poor, honest, simple-hearted men? Just peasant boys—taken into the army of their own country. Shall they not stretch out trembling hands for mercy—not finding it—lost——

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap!"

Why take thought over the outcome?

CHAPTER XX

THE CONDITIONS AMONG THE MILITARY PRISONERS

My children were gradually gaining strength. If they could have had the proper nourishing food the recovery would have been rapid. I lived in the hope of getting away, of going over Sweden to my husband. Every day rising with the thought "perhaps today my petition will be answered!" I was certain before the green was on the trees we should be re-united. Many times I was indifferent about the petition thinking before the answer came, the Russians would be back. The big guns talked to us of our friends in the outer world, every night. From eleven until four in the morning was the usual programme. Well it was that summer was coming for constant cannonading made it necessary to keep the windows ajar, lest they be broken.

One day, our kind friend, the doctor, told me

my house was to be a German Hospital. My protectors, the "Tyfus" signs were to be removed, but I should not be molested by the military because the whole house would be under the jurisdiction of the surgeon-in-charge. Also I was given permission to feed the prisoners without molestation. That I owed to the kind doctor.

The hospital was arranged; orderlies sleeping in the rooms just beyond those occupied by us. The furniture was taken, much of it, away from me, for when the signs were gone, the military were free to enter without knocking. Many of them had good taste, knowing an old and valuable piece of furniture when they saw one! Our pictures disappeared. My portrait made the journey into Prussia, the officer who took it asking me if I thought it would arrive safely. The frame had been taken apart—all was packed with extreme, shall I say, efficiency! Those things had ceased to trouble me, they were laid down long ago, but it began to wear on my spirit,—the delay——!

There was little time to think of myself except the long nights with their bursting grenade and

thunderous cannon. Very often I did not undress, thinking surely the Germans would be driven out, —over and over that happened.

One day a company of prisoners were passing. Just in front of our windows one fell to the ground. Armed with my permission I went out to see what could be done. Not much! Green-yellow, wearing the heaviest fur cap and coat of winter, the man was plainly dying of starvation. The Germans in charge even tried to help me when they saw my permission. One was kind enough to offer me his flask. As I poured a few drops of cognac down the poor prisoner's throat I hoped it would not prolong his suffering. In a state of filth unimaginable, covered with vermin, a skeleton, why should he be kept alive? The other prisoners even told me that it would be better to let him be. When the German soldier on guard saw the man had ceased to breathe, he told me there were some men whom I *could* help—with frightful boils—they would wait while I attended the sores. Three men, suffering, emaciated, were escorted to my kitchen; they should have had hospital care. The poor creatures instantly begged me for food.

"Little Sister, give us something to eat. We have been kept in the forest, near the trenches, working—there was nothing to eat—many of us died like our comrade!"

My cook did not need to be told what to do; she had the samovar already going, and the usual soup for the prisoners was cooking.

The Germans camped outside the house with their prisoners promising to wait until I had quite finished attending the men. My patients were in such a dreadful state it was difficult to know where to begin. I gave them hot water and soap—*their first wash since being taken captive!* It was part of the *Kultur* to keep them dirty. One had insects under the skin of his back. I had still a few of our hospital shirts and drawers, and I told the men to put them on while I got things together to dress the terrible boils. They were like little children in their delight with the clean linen; they looked almost like human beings! Their heads were about the worst—hundreds of men packed together—no attempt at cleanliness—no water—no soap—no combs—! how could it be otherwise? I gave them each a half cupful of soup; they

protested at the amount, but after taking a few sips they suffered pain.

It was not pleasant work attending them. Before the war I could not have looked at such things, now— After cleansing as much as possible their sores, I placed compresses of alcohol and water covered with oiled silk upon them, binding them up. More than the hideous sores were to my eyes the marks of the blows upon the men; the back of one of them was fairly flayed for some misdemeanour. He had been tied to the triangle. Were they men or fiends to do such things? One of the men was without hands. He told how they were lost. When a great company of prisoners came on some where in East Prussia there was no barracks to accommodate them. The men were forced to wait in the bitter cold of January two days, without shelter, with their hands tied behind them. When the barracks were finally ready many were dead—frozen—those still alive were herded under sheds dignified by the name of barracks, the heat of their bodies melting the snow which formed the floor. Many of the men lost hands and feet. Their food was raw

potatoes and green tea. And the patience of those prisoners,—even now I cannot think calmly of those men.

After my patients were bound up I returned them to the German soldiers. How their poor comrades stared, imploring like favours for themselves. They had eaten the soup cooked for my other prisoners, those by the church, who that day went hungry, and when it was time for them to pass the house I hid myself knowing what my failure to send food meant. The next day when I carried food to them how they welcomed me. They thought I had been punished for helping them. When they understood why, for there were many Poles, who explained to the Russians why I had failed to come, they said yes, it was right; one of them counting already *five* times he had been lucky enough to be fed by me! All the prisoners were glad to be detailed to that horrible work for a little food! One day they dug up fourteen Germans who had been buried in our garden, the first time the Germans occupied Suwalki. Buried hurriedly, after eight months to remove them absolutely without consideration for those who

were compelled to do the work, or the people who were near, and could not move away! But, of course, we did not exist, therefore could not have eyes or senses offended or sickened; we had no right to feel! I arranged a room where the prisoners, who were my patients, might come, having to stand at the window in sight of the German soldier on guard. They all had the dreadful boils, livid and purple. One of those men fairly haunts me. He was worse than usual. He had been so many months a prisoner that when I spoke to him kindly he wept piteously,—a wreck of a man, broken by hunger and ill-usage. I gave him soup and had just started to iodine his back when his guard took him off . . . ! Can anything ever take the memory of his eyes away from me,—and I never saw him afterwards! That supremely miserable man I was not allowed to help.

Once I heard a German Sister telling a Russian to stop something, and went to see what was happening. The Russian was digging in a horrid heap of hospital refuse, having found a crust of bread. He showed it joyfully to his companions, then started to eat it! The German Sister told

him he would die—why did he eat such a thing? I asked her if she could not give him something better; that he really was not anxious to eat such a filthy crust of bread. She hesitated; Sisters have not many rights in a German hospital. An orderly heard us talking, and brought a big dish of soup, thick, with *lumps of meat!* The prisoner ate it ravenously, and three hours afterwards was dead. One by one they rise up before my eyes, those creatures who had been men—soldiers!

At the back of our house was employed daily a party of eight. The German in charge often came to sit in my kitchen, allowing the prisoners to fetch and carry. One of them, Ivan, was especially afflicted with boils, and so intensely grateful for anything done for him, as indeed they all were. He had been a cabinet-maker and one day brought three toys for the children—Cossacks, cleverly carved. Of course all the Germans wanted them for their children also. This was a good thing for Ivan, bringing him a little favourable notice, and more freedom. Upon one occasion he told me of a plot the prisoners had made to kill one of their own number, a Russian soldier, but neither a Russian

nor a Pole, who having swung over to the German side, was put in authority over his fellows, telling on them, continually getting them punished, beaten. The spy was of course well fed, and Ivan told me he spied also upon me, with the help of his co-religionists in the town. That frightened me, but I tried to make them stop planning to kill him. The spy was in authority over them at night, at least he reported their every word. How I loathed his leering humility, pitying the man who had sold himself. There was no preventing the plot from being carried out, short of reporting it to the Germans, which would be a spy's work. After all it was what Ivan had called it,—an execution. The spy had deserted his comrades, causing them untold suffering. How the plan was carried out I do not know, but it succeeded. A success dearly paid for! Every man the spy had reported being "severely punished." When those people who were to enlighten an ignorant world with their *Kultur* said "severe punishment" it meant those punished were left with their lives, just this side of death—and preferring it a thousand times!

CHAPTER XXI

THE CAPTAIN RETURNS

THE time wore on. The Germans made order, commanding all gardens to be cleaned. Prisoners were made to dig up and plant with grass seed the park in the centre of the town. As it was directly in front of our windows I could watch much that happened. As always the planting of the park began when a great battle was on. At such times some extra demonstration of power was invariably made to impress the townspeople with the hopelessness of resistance. We breathed more freely when the big guns sounded near. A ripple of excitement breaking the grey sea of misery surrounding us. I have seen the prisoners stop and listen—one could almost read their thoughts by their attitude—hoping and wondering if their own men would not carry the enemy's trenches. Just

between our house and the park lay the road which led to East Prussia. Each time a battle took an unfortunate turn we would see the few remaining stores carried off. Bags of grain, even the stores of provisions in the military shops, furniture, pianos, and people went at such times. Suwalki was absolutely empty, but they always seemed to find something overlooked. The people were left without a pot or a pan to cook food in, if they could get it. The samovars were gone; so there was no longer the comfort of hot water to make tea.

Hope awakened each time the battle drew near, but we paid dearly for it. All sorts of punishments were laid upon the townspeople because they dared to show a little more interest. Then, when we would really rejoice thinking at last the moment had arrived—reinforcements for the Germans would come singing through the town. Pandemonium once more reigned and brutalities were committed. We feared the troops when they sang! Once more the wounded would come pouring in, pitiful remnants of men, and worst of all fresh prisoners! That was the most difficult to bear. Once a Cossack was caught and hung—shot full of

holes, and left to hang. This happened more than once, but this instance I saw!

With all their cleverness the Germans were sometimes fooled; for they did not always find out who their prisoners were. Upon one occasion there was a tremendous battle, and four prisoners got away. Three were strong enough to try for the Russian trenches; they had German uniforms. One came to me and I kept him hidden for almost two weeks and many people knew it. I finally got some clothes for him, deciding that at the first opportunity he should be put into the kitchen to work, as a relation of one of my servants. Just the very day I felt it unsafe to wait longer, and put him into the kitchen, where so many people went in and out, the bluff Captain came back. It was a shock.

The Captain had been ill of a fever and spent most of his time in a hospital; later he had gone once more to Augustowo, and now was in Suwalki on sick leave. As he greeted me, he asked if I would take care of him. Naturally I had to. So once more I had the military in my rooms, and the odious orderlies, Max and Fritz. I wondered

why God let Max live and took so many of the soldiers who were kind. The Russian soldier (a Pole, twenty years old, a volunteer) was sent to carry some hot water to the Captain, for I felt it was better to be bold, and the Captain said never a word. He was really ill, absolutely unable to digest anything, and drank too much. I made him some gruel, thereby getting a supply of Quaker oats for the children. Noticing something strange about the look of the gruel left on the plate I resolved to find out the next time what it was, and caught the Captain in the act of pouring a half bottle of cognac into his gruel. I told him so long as he was my patient he could not touch alcohol, for I was responsible to the doctor. The Captain was ill, but two days afterwards announced his departure for the trenches. He told me how the drink habit had grown upon him, because the war made him so nervous, the everlasting danger, and the waiting in the trenches. While in my house he received a new decoration, making a brave display upon his uniform. A kind-hearted man was the Captain; verily I believe the brutalities he was forced to countenance made

drink his only refuge from his own thoughts. Some time afterwards I was not surprised to learn from his orderly, Fritz, that the Captain had died in delirium tremens; and Fritz, having lost his master, was on his way to the trenches. Max was in the commissary department,—a good one, he, to press the last drop of blood from the people. After keeping the Russian soldier as long as I dared, he went to ask for work on the railroad. If he got paid, is another story. At least he got some sort of food and was treated with more consideration than a military prisoner would have been. But, it was a terrible risk I ran!

CHAPTER XXII

THE LIVES OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE

LIVE—we did not live—we barely existed! One grey day blurring into another, waiting, always waiting for something to happen. Hoping against hope for deliverance. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" might have been written for the prisoners of war, and when hope is lost, life hangs loosely by a thread—how many there were who cut the thread!

Belated spring came to us, and the "white nights," but it did not matter. . . . I changed my thought of rejoining my husband from before the green was on the trees to Wanda's birthday—the sixteenth of June, reminding myself of a donkey who had to be coaxed along the road by a bunch of carrots.

One day our kind friend, the doctor, came to tell me one of the Russian sisters was ill; would I

take her in? Of course it was a happiness to be able to do so. But after all was prepared for her reception the Germans refused permission for her to come to me. However, I dared to go to her. She was in the Russian Hospital. A sad place was that Russian Hospital. Without hope, shut off from the world. I spoke with the different officers, taking messages, promising to carry letters. It comforted them and I was convinced that some day I would get out.

The poor sister was very ill, in mind as well as body; but there was nothing I could do to help—my duty was towards the prisoners on the streets, who were not allowed in the hospital. On my way home I stopped with two other sisters at the soldiers' hospital, seeing acquaintances carrying food to the wounded; that awful pea soup with stray potatoes. Everything was grimly clean for the prevention of infection to the German soldiers; there had been such awful epidemics that they were a little more careful. When leaving that hospital the German soldiers on guard jeered at and insulted us—saying there were no officers there, why had we come? And much more to the

same effect, only worse. We paid no attention to what was said, only I shall not soon forget that walk back through the town. Every soldier had something to say. How glad I was to have my own roof. When I thought of those two girls facing those wretched, insulting soldiers every time they went to dinner, I felt my rooms a haven of safety. Oh! yes, I was favoured!

After the Captain left, the military used my apartment more. They would come and sit, using it as a Club. Very often an officer took up his quarters there for a few days. So it happened on the 7th, 8th, and 9th of May.

On the morning of the 8th, my cook came back from the town, telling me the Germans were celebrating some great deed. She had not got the story straight, but the soldiers were given license that day. Misfortune enough for us! In the evening the officers celebrated at my house, a great number of them,—I was begged to give them tea. There was no use objecting, it would only have brought misfortune upon us, so samovar after samovar I patiently served them. Tea! A half glass or cup of rum, and a little water and tea.

My cook told me how things were going early in the evening. In the officers' room they drank great glasses full of brandy and so on, then came to the table to drink their tea.

The tongues were loosened quickly enough and I heard the terrible story of the *Lusitania*. They read me the dispatches, trying to make me express an opinion. What would have happened to us had I dared to express my opinion? It was taking a risk to say, "God have mercy on the poor ones left behind," as I did, hardly trusting myself to speak. Even that brought a storm of protest upon me. No one was to blame, only the English, the people had been warned, they had gone to their deaths with their eyes open—and so on, *ad libitum*, opening the way for the most terrible tirade against the Americans.

I had listened to enough terrible things uttered against the English to call down destruction upon my house where they were uttered—not daring to say one word in protest. It would have cost our lives. But when they began to blackguard America and the Americans, beginning with the President, then I felt the time had come to make them under-

stand I would not listen to everything. Trembling so that my knees almost refused to support me, I rose from the table, saying:

"I will not listen to one more word against America. I am heart-sick over this horrible news. You must excuse me from further service."

This had the effect of sobering them, a certain high officer saying,

"The gracious lady is right!"

Another one suggested that, before I went, the health of the Kaiser and the victory of the German arms be drunk. They had champagne, and I let them pour a glassful for me without protest—fetching a small carafe. When they drank the toast I simply emptied the glass into the carafe, saying when there was so much illness in the town, those few drops might save somebody's life. At this one of the officers brought me a full bottle of champagne from his room, saying:

"Now you will drink our toast!"

Frightened, but even more determined, I answered,

"No! Not if there were rivers of champagne!" instantly adding, "that I was awfully glad to get

the wine for my patients, even if I did not feel called upon to thank them for it. They had taken so much from me."

Saying "good-night," with a certain finality of tone I went to my children. I drew up a chair between the boys' cribs, and lifting little Wanda from the bed held her in my arms, thinking that if they tried to make me pour more tea I should have my excuse ready.

For a few minutes after I left, the officers were quieter, but soon they began to sing—to cry "*Hoch! Hoch! Hoch!*" growing so noisy in their carousal that the children were awakened. This once I was thankful, for when an officer came to beg me to come to the table once more, I was very busy with the children—laying my finger on my lips and shaking my head as an answer. Dash, our little Spitz dog, growled continually that night. She knew there was danger, and, in her animal way, expressed sympathy! It was such a fearsome night in the town—with the soldiers drinking—that not many people slept. At three o'clock the officer came once more, swaying from side to side in his efforts to keep his balance, to bid me

serve them with tea. I had my little daughter in my arms, and she began to cry, thus giving me courage to say:

"No! I cannot leave the child. You have all had quite enough. It is time to go to bed, and let my children sleep."

I suppose the bare fact of speaking in this way impressed a drunken man, and also that I showed no fear. At any rate by four o'clock when the guns ceased their cannonade, it was quiet in the house, leaving me to wonder how many such nights I could live through and keep my reason—thinking of my plight, that I must be civil to men who could rejoice over the innocent lives lost when the *Lusitania* went down.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SALE OF ALCOHOL IS ONCE MORE PERMITTED

My refusal to drink the toast was evidently reported for on the 9th of May my petition was refused! I was not to be allowed to rejoin my husband. It was a blow, coming right on top of the horrors of that orgy, but I refused to let myself be discouraged, feeling if that happened we never should be let out, knowing somehow, sometime, my prayers would be answered. I immediately busied myself writing another petition. The officers were still there on the 9th. Two of them looked a little ashamed when they greeted me. One, however, told me he had something for me to read,—written by an American.

Thereupon, I was introduced to Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who is English, not American! What an awful creature he must be to write such things. Also what an awful lot of money he

must have received as the price of his soul! For he has painted the Germans as the Germans dream of being—blameless, angelic. Point by point, comparing the English with the Germans, he presents the former in character and language vastly to their disadvantage. They are left without a feather; plucked bare! Though he *did* say English was the only possible rival of the German as a world language, simply because there was a resemblance between the two! English being suited only for commerce, for the people had the true commercial soul, which soul was in their pocket-books. But, to make love, to express tenderness, or great and high sentiments, the only language in the world was the German. Seeing so much of their high nobility at close range I felt like expressing myself also in German, with the word which was oftenest on their lips "*Hinaus!*" As no one but a German would by any chance read those booklets of Herr Chamberlain's, they can do small harm. And if any one did read them, they could not be taken seriously. The compliments showered upon the Germans are too fulsome.

I was also given a booklet by Sven Hedin. He is

clever, at least. *A People in Arms* is carried about by most of the officers. All very fine; but, if Hedin had been a prisoner to those people, left to their tender mercies, instead of travelling about as the guest of the commanding General, perhaps his song would have been written in another key. Most probably it would not have been one of praise.

Once more life settled down to a grey routine of waiting. We were told that "civil government" was to be given the town. Naturally we poor prisoners dreaded it, knowing any change would be for the worse. Food again grew scarce. One day there was literally nothing of which to make soup for the military prisoners. When the time to feed them came, and food was not forthcoming, the German soldier on watch came to ask what was the reason for the delay! When I told him he said to give him money, and he would buy bread for the waiting hungry prisoners. My cook went with him and a Jew was forced to sell bread at a more reasonable rate than he demanded of the townspeople. The precedent was not a good one for me. Very often after that demand was made

upon me for money, and my funds were simply evaporating. Once when the prisoners employed about the hospital asked me for food, I gave each a silver half rouble. There were only four of them, and they told me some of the German soldiers would sell a piece of their bread if they had silver money to pay for it. For this I was severely reprimanded. I was told my privilege of feeding prisoners or caring for them would be taken away if I did such a thing again. Curious indeed! If I even delayed feeding the prisoners the German soldiers were after me insisting on my giving food yet threatening to forbid it.

Two prisoners were given to serve the old Jewish woman, who proudly said she was and always had been a German spy. They had to carry wood and water for her, receiving much abuse. A contrast to another old Jewess, whom I often saw and who helped all she could, feeding the unfortunate ones. She would come with a little pail of soup or cereal, whatever she could get, the soldiers standing about her and dipping in with their own spoons. The poor old woman always shared her food with the men,—it was only a few spoonsful,—but what

a difference it made! Rain or shine she was there with her little pail, asking no permission, and for some reason never was stopped. Her son was somewhere among the Russian soldiers.

The Jewish people were not meeting with the treatment, which they had been led to expect. Fines were continually imposed upon them. Everything had been taken away. Of course they were clever enough to have money concealed where not even the enemy could find it, bringing it out when a time of comparative quiet came. Many got permission to buy things in Prussia. We had some benefit from this even if it cost us dearly. I got ten pounds of sugar, paying ten roubles. The thing which was really bad for the town was the fact that alcohol was once more on sale. People who could not buy food were beginning to drink rum!

CHAPTER XXIV

IN TROUBLE THROUGH THE CHILDREN

TOWARDS the last day of May, there was an awful battle lasting four days and nights. So strong was the cannonading that no one thought of going to bed. The nights were light, or it might have been worse watching through the hours. I begged an orderly in the hospital to get me a candle—it was so trying to sit listening without occupation—and those nights I dressed Wanda's doll. To read was impossible and there were only small matters to write of in my journal. I *had* to keep awake; in fact it was impossible to sleep!

The town was surrounded by fire, for the Germans often used those awful spurting flames. We could hear the singing of the shells, and the impatient tuk-tuk-tuk of the machine guns. For some reason that was the sound I dreaded most,—more than the big cannons. After the first night's

battle, we heard that the Russians were gaining. The Germans in the town were all packed up for flight. Prisoners were driven off to East Prussia—hope ran high! Wounded arrived in such numbers that the hospitals already closed for evacuation had to be opened once more. Regiment after regiment of reinforcements went dashing through the town singing! Always a fearsome sign. And artillery—the heavy gun-carriages almost deafening one. Such a din they made! And how we rejoiced when the sound of battle came nearer. We were sad, too, when we thought of all the lives lost in such a fight.

The first day some officers took quarters in the rooms of our house, that had been reserved for me—they were awaiting the word to go to the trenches. One of them, a young Herr Lieutenant, played about with the children. He was quite young and very sympathetic, and though the children had steadfastly refused to make friends with the Germans, they seemed to like this one. After spending the day in our rooms, this officer was called out that evening. We were not so glad the second night, for such tremendous reinforce-

ments had arrived that we could not picture to ourselves a force sufficient to overcome them. The next morning we were all standing at the windows watching the wounded arrive at the hospital, when the Herr Lieutenant came into the room! Only over night away, but hardly to be recognized. He was painfully wounded, shot through the elbow, and with various flesh wounds. He was torn, and soiled, and covered with blood stains. The most remarkable expression was on his face—the boyishness quite wiped out, through the suffering.

The poor fellow needed attention sorely, but there were such crowds at the hospital he had to wait. Of course I dared not touch his wound—being a prisoner! I could only do what was possible to make him comfortable—he was faint from pain and hunger. The children were sorry and showed him sweet sympathy. It was curious to hear them talk English to him—standing about as he drank black coffee. Something seemed to be working in the little minds, and finally it came out. Staś said:

"Mammy, what dreadful people the Germans are to shoot their own officers!"

"The Germans did not shoot him, but the Russians! Those were Russian bullets," I explained.

"Mammy, mammy, did the Russians kill all those Germans we saw carried by, and all the wounded in the hospital, did the Russians shoot them?"

In her eagerness to know Wanda could hardly take time to speak.

"Yes, darling, the Russians did all that!"

"Oh goody—goody"—the children began to dance about, wild with joy. The boys wanted to look at the officer's wounds, which the Russians had made; it was difficult to stop them; they had a little orgy of their own. I had not understood; their introduction to the principle of war had just then taken place! It made me heart-sick to see how glad they were to see a wounded man. It was because they had seen so much of the horrible things done by the Germans. I could not help, though I dreaded the effect upon the childish characters; and looked at the officer imploringly. He was kind, and said:

"I will not report this. You are safe, but don't

let them say such things when others are about. You are responsible for your children."

The battle grew in fierceness all that day. Suwalki was almost emptied of Germans. I bought everything it was possible to buy, thinking the Russians would come in hungry after the fight —even bread was to be had! A Jew came to offer it to me—he said he was baking for "our soldiers!" Well, poor creature—he was only trying to save his own skin!

One night more, and then the firing grew farther away—Oh! the awfulness of that feeling of knowing the enemy was still in possession, the despair, the difficulty of keeping any routine in life; one felt the suffering of the people of the town in the very air, and they would be *"bestrafed"!*

I tried to teach the children something I did not myself believe, but a childish mind is not easily convinced. I told them they must be polite to the Germans or else Mammy would get shot too. Wladek did not take this quite the way I expected —he is such a little patriot—as they all are, but Wladek could not be made to feel the necessity of hiding his feelings!

That afternoon some more officers came in telling me they would like black coffee. One was a typical Prussian—big, red, and brutal. He tried to talk to the children. They would have nothing to do with him. He walked about the room twirling his riding whip, laughing, and satisfied with the result of the battle. So great was his satisfaction he must even express it to the children. "*Russky kaput!*" (the Russians are finished!) he kept saying over and over.

The children were antagonistic and frowning. What was about to happen I did not know. I dared not interfere nor say one word. Wladek could at last stand it no longer. He went right up to the officer with his brother and sister by the hand, saying,

"*Nein, nein*—German *kaput!*"

The officer started after him furiously. Wladek tried to run still calling out, "German *kaput.*"

I caught the boy, begging him to be quiet. The officer shook his riding whip over us.

"We see how you teach your children, Madame! You must make the boy say, '*Russky kaput,*' or I will beat him till he does!"

Even then Wladek went right on saying: "German *kaput*." He seemed possessed—though he did not try to run—feeling his weakness.

The officer tried to take him from me, saying he would give the boy a lesson. When it came to that point I just defied him also, telling him to leave the children alone, that he was only making the boy resentful, that he dared not touch my child still weak from fever, that if he did it would be over my dead body. A horrible scene and one which my boys will never forget; but, we won out!

I used the argument once more that I was an American—in America a man would not strike a little helpless, weak child, and we were finally left in peace. How frightened I was! But not Wladek! He was only glad now it was over, that he had defied the "Germans."

CHAPTER XXV

WHITSUNTIDE

THE big fight was over. Our captors settled themselves down for an indefinite stay. We in the town paid dearly for the hopes we had dared to entertain. Fines innumerable were imposed;—half the people were in prison,—and we had "civil" government. Curiously enough the "*Bezirkschef*" was a Russian Jew with a very funny name! He was from Courland, and immediately let us feel his power. Especially, did I come in for various favours! As soon as he arrived, my petition was again refused. He held that I was a spy, and was on the watch to catch me. One of the reasons given for refusing my petition was that I had fed the prisoners! This time they were right. If I could have got information to the Russians I would have done so, with joy and gladness, only there was no chance! Also I fed the prisoners.

The three Russian Sisters were convicted of espionage. Evidently one of them had asked some question of a German officer. I trembled for them, the one was still weak from the fever, when they came to me one day to tell me they were to be taken into Germany. Feeling the danger to me and my children through their visit they hardly wished to sit down. A German doctor came in to see what they were up to, also a soldier. We spoke of music and art and such things. The doctor wished me to sing,—under such circumstances! Those three girls had something to tell me, but got no chance,—poor souls they had lived through awful things. A few days afterwards I saw them driven along the street to the train, every soldier jeering, surrounded by men with guns on their shoulders.

My funds were very low, but my cook had her savings. They were in my care. She had long ago begged me to take them—over four hundred and fifty roubles. I had to do it or else stop helping the prisoners. The men who came for medical help every day expected me to give them a shirt and soap. I could not bear to disappoint them.

Many peasants and Jews came with old shirts for me to buy. One Jew dug up from some refuse heap a lot of the Russian soldiers' shirts, evidently left when the town was evacuated. He wanted thirty kopecks a garment. I told him it was his duty to bring them to me without money. What would happen to him when the Russians came back if I told them such a story! This frightened him and we finally compromised on ten kopecks!

The conditions among the prisoners were no better—only more prisoners! There was little resemblance left to humanity in the men, when the Germans had had them for a while;—they were not only starved, but beaten!

I used to feel that I should go mad if I could not see some one who was neither a prisoner nor a conqueror, but just a human being.

Whitsuntide came, and with it the German priest returned to his duties in Suwalki. This time the military used my apartment as quarters, so we had less of his company, but still too much! He spoke to the townspeople, giving them a message which purported to come from the Pope, a message of non-resistance, humility, and obedience! The

Kaiser was to restore the ancient glory of Rome, the temporal kingdom! Every good Catholic was to help the Germans in every way; God was on their side. The falsehood was obvious,—but still the peasants were intimidated. Their own priests did not dare to contradict openly,—but no one believed the German. On Whitsuntide the soldiers were given license to drink as much as they wished; my piano was carried into the garden; chairs, tables, and couches were taken wherever found, and . . . a reign of terror began. A woman dared not look out of a window. The men sang and danced and yelled, and amused themselves with any unfortunate one of the town whom they caught. The guns were almost silent those nights; if only word could have been sent to the Russians!

One night I was bathing my children. We were speaking of our dear one, wondering where he might be, when a clangour of the church bells startled us. So many months there had not been a sound from them,—then all at once every bell in the town was ringing! The first thought was naturally that the Germans were caught—sur-

rounded. A lady came rushing in to me, so excited her whole face quivered. We did not say much, but glanced hopefully at each other. I had the children to put to bed, whatever was happening, and would not speak of our hopes before them. When the little people were in bed and their prayers said, I told them to lie quietly while I went to see why the bells rang. My visitor and myself went on the balcony, by this time the Germans were parading —singing. Every once in awhile a Hoch—Hoch—Hoch—would rend the air. We came down so rapidly from our high hopes, with hearts sick and sore from hope deferred, that I hardly cared what it was, until a German orderly from the hospital called out to me,

"*Lemberg ist gefallen!*"

Lemberg—fallen—taken by the Germans. . . . We two women clung together—a blow indeed—what suffering it would mean to the town—they would be punished horribly! The Austro-German army would forget that it had been Austrian territory before the war. . . . I could picture to myself just what was going on;—and my husband's post was in Lemberg! Surely he had

long since left. . . . I could have torn my hair out in the anxiety, the uncertainty—of the moment:—if I could just know if he were alive—and not a prisoner.

Little Wanda kept calling, wishing to know if the Germans were going. I told her no, but that they had taken the town where Tatuś was. The child comforted me when she said, "But Tatuś is not there—Wanda knows it!"

I gathered my wee girl in my arms . . . if I could have cried it would have made my heart easier.

After Wanda had fallen asleep I laid her on the bed and went back to my visitor. I was afraid my apartment would be selected for the officers to celebrate in—I peeped out from behind the curtain;—not one soul was to be seen, only the rioting soldiery—the bells kept up their din—they seemed to beat one into the earth.

The next day fines were imposed upon most of the people—because they had not rejoiced when Lemberg was set free, out of her bondage to such freedom as we enjoyed! If we could only have attained that point of view things might have been

easier for us—we might then have let the prisoners starve and not have shown our displeasure when they were beaten—but owing perhaps to our woeful lack of *Kultur* we could not quite attain to the Prussian way of thinking!

CHAPTER XXVI

A NEW PETITION

I WAS astonished to receive one morning a summons brought by a soldier to a meeting of the people responsible for the town. It was to take place in the rooms of a gentleman (a noble) who had unfortunately remained to protect his interests. His house was about in the same condition as mine—only I had a few rooms, and he only two;—and even there the common soldiers who occupied the house made themselves at home, —sleeping in his bed, if it so pleased them.

When I attended the meeting there were many people I had not seen since we were shut off from the world,—among them the engineer and the nobleman with his two sons, Pan W. I asked them why they did not come to me. They said they did not wish to get me into more trouble. I told them they could not, so they might as

well come. The new man, near-the-head of the civil government, the Courlandish Jew was there; my enemy! I was as polite as possible, just as if he had not refused my petition. I had written another one and wondered what would happen. Perhaps they would get tired of reading my petitions and let me go to be rid of the trouble!

When the *Bezirkschef* began to talk we found we were called together to institute a typhus hospital for the town—the disease was all over. The idea was we were to find house, beds, bedding, nurses, and food; the Germans would make the apothecaries give all drugs and disinfectants.

I immediately said my time was more than full, for I was detailed to care for the prisoners working upon the streets and had three small children. A lady who was a nurse in the Russian hospital, working night and day, said she could not help for she was head nurse where the surgical cases were.

The man was furious at us for answering, and said it was all one; we had either to do it ourselves or pay for the doing of it, and he would hold our host responsible for it. It was horrid to see that

ordinary creature intimidate those people. Most of them spoke German indifferently because they had never wished to, and now they were at a disadvantage,—as there was no one there who could take the responsibility. After various hair-raising threats we were ordered home,—not before I was told I would surely be called upon to do my share of the nursing—to which I answered that besides the two reasons given I was leaving Suwalki! How he laughed—and said, "No, never." Also that he was coming to have a look at my papers. Well he said that for it had never occurred to me someone would try to look through our documents, which were cleverly enough hidden.

In the wardrobe, which stood in my bedroom, behind the heavy mirror was a number of drawers. By pulling out the lower one, concealed at the back was a very good secret compartment. There rested the leather case which contained our documents. I looked through them nervously as soon as I got back from the meeting, fearing to be interrupted. I decided to show three only, and my husband's Munich University diploma. I dared not show my wedding certificate—because

there it was written I was born in Canada! My father was an American citizen, I had lived all my life in the United States, never having been in Canada for more than short visits. Still if my birthplace were discovered, nothing could save me.

My children's baptismal certificates could be shown. They were Austrian, for the children were born in Cracow, where my husband was Professor in the University. Before our sons were two years old we had gone to live in Russia to make them Russian subjects. The family estates were in the Kingdom of Poland (Russian) and my husband had been called to serve in the Department of Agriculture—having two governments, Lomza and Suwalki, under his jurisdiction. His especial branch of science was hydrotechnique. In the children's certificates was a simple statement of dates, my name, and the word that my husband was a Professor of the Jagiellonian University of Cracow! These I laid aside and concealed the rest—some of them old and interesting. We had kept those documents with us since the war began, and after the first evacuation of Suwalki they had been in my

care. One was an old patent for a French title given by Henri de Valois when he came to be King of Poland—many families had received the same, but most of these letters had disappeared in the course of the years.

There was a legend in our family that the great-grandfather drove seven days with a sledge to get his patent of nobility signed in Petrograd, when that was made necessary by the new laws. That document above all others had to be concealed.

After making up my mind which documents to show I wrote a petition to the "Herr Presidial Rat" of Suwalki (the nearest English term to that is the Presidential adviser, but it does not mean that) begging leave to present a petition in person! I was growing impatient, and I felt that the more I worried at them, the nearer my release would be.

In a day or two I was granted my request, and found a curious old man, a "*von*," rather incompetent, and who was probably regarded as a figure-head only. My enemy was the real chief! I gave him the documents and presented my petition, telling him it was the fourth! This time I begged permission to go to Norway—if that were not

possible, then to America, though I did not see my way clear to get there, but I had a lively trust in Providence.

The chief was very polite, looking at my card with interest, but told me I was known to the authorities as a Russian sympathizer, and had shown great distress at the fall of Lemberg. I admitted this,—but how could we feel otherwise when Poland was being trodden into the earth—exterminated! He answered if I could only see the rights of the matter,—how Germany was the only friend and salvation of Poland,—my affairs would move along with celerity. As it was, the petition should be sent to the chief commander of the army, with his recommendation, for he was saddened to see a noble woman brought to such straits.

CHAPTER XXVII

A NEW FRIEND

THE chief result of this last petition was that the Germans began to call me Frau Professorin! Almost immediately after that we made a new friend, an humble one, but true. The children were walking in the garden with my cook when they met a soldier, who spoke English with them; they liked him and led him home with them to see their Mammy. He told me he had been a waiter in the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, later in Brussels. He was caught there when the war broke out and was forced to go to Germany, which meant the army for him. He was a great tall fellow and the children called him "dear little Gustav!" How he regretted not being in America, and he was certainly not enthusiastic over the war! He was serving a doctor as orderly, and I have many kindnesses to thank him for. He

would go walking with the children, often bringing us some delicacy. Once a wonderful box came for him—a present from his sweetheart! There were all sorts of things,—a loaf of curious, black-looking "sandkuchen," a cake which had been a great favourite in Germany—but which was not suited to be made with black flour and little sugar; a jar of raspberry jam, a tremendous sausage, bread, a tiny package of salt, which I was especially glad to get, for salt had reached a rouble a pound! A little pot of butter! All these glorious things Gustav brought to me for the children, and I accepted them simply with a thankful heart. This kind fellow suggested a petition begging for permission to buy in the German military store. There were fruits, marmalade, smoked fish, canned vegetables, extracts of meat for soups, everything to be had,—but the townspeople dared only gaze at the wares from a distance. A soldier was on guard before the door. It was hard to be hungry, have money, yet not permitted to buy food!

The people used to stand about, trying to induce some good-natured soldier to buy them something, perhaps an orange for some sick person, or child.

They dared not do it, however, but Gustav often bought things for me running the risk of detection. Just before the sixteenth of June, my little daughter's birthday, through the kind doctor's influence, I received permission to buy for my family. After that Gustav brought a whole load of stuff every day, for I bought for the town! We had quite a jubilee! One day Gustav came with the great news that pails of marmalade were there to buy, and he had secured one, knowing I would wish it. As I was excitedly watching the opening of the pail, our priest came in! He also was excited! We immediately had tea and slices of black bread, thick with jam! There were five pounds of it, so I sent five glasses to people I knew especially needed "heartening." Gustav good-naturedly offered to fetch more if one of the children might go with him—that meant Wanda, for he adored her! He brought two more pails. One I kept—the other by various means and by-ways, for it was not allowed, arrived at the Russian hospital.

Another thing I found there was "pudding-powder" a sort of cereal, which swelled with cooking, increasing greatly. A most desirable

quality in war time! It was sweet and seasoned with fruit—the children were delighted with the pink kind. This also I was able to get a quantity of, sending it to the typhus patients in the Russian hospital.

The prisoners on the street were made glad by pails of tea with slices of lemon, an unheard of luxury. So many had the scurvy it was a medicine for them.

The hardest thing I ever did—and for me to say this means something—was to draw a line to say there was no more. I wished to feed them all—I felt like the mother of the town! My funds would have given out long before if the cook had not held me back—saying there would be nothing for the children. It was maddening to see such suffering and to be able to relieve so little of it. What was feeding forty-two daily, with perhaps ten more added because I *could* not say no. It was less than a drop in the sea among all those suffering thousands! Seemingly always more and more for the men were employed in the forests, building bridges, digging trenches, though many had been sent on.

Suwalki often hung by a hair—it was so nearly retaken by the Russians. At one time of such uncertainty, I was afraid to let the children go out, and I kept them in the balcony. An officer going by said something to a Russian prisoner employed in cleaning the gutter. The Russian, not understanding and naturally expecting a blow, cringed—raising his hand with the shovel to his head, I suppose seeking to protect his face. The officer pulled out his pistol and shot him dead, forbidding the body to be removed.

"Let the Russian dogs have a lesson!"

My children saw it all. In the night they thought of it, crying out. Their first question in the morning was if the Russian soldier had been buried. The poor body laid there until that officer was moved on with his regiment. It remained uncovered, and it was summer time. What would I not give to wipe that memory from my children's minds, the horror of that decaying thing at our door. Was it any wonder that one could hardly breathe the air? The peculiar sickish, sweet odour of war! How it permeated everything! It would have been better

to keep the windows closed, had we dared, but the big guns talked too often.

So we endured—even with the ever-increasing number of dead lying about in the forests and swamps.

Before the war, one of the delights of the Polish summer had been the wonderful song birds—nightingales, larks by the thousands showering their exquisite, joyous melody from the clouds upon a people who worked hard but also knew how to be gay. Who that has seen a Polish "harvest-home" can ever forget it? The dancing of the peasants, wonderful and graceful, gallant and free like the song of the larks; it moved one by its spontaneity. Of all the birds, of all the varieties there remained only—the carrion crows, hundreds of them—croaking hoarsely—filling one with horror and repulsion. The peasants said they were the spirits of the evil deeds committed about us. One could almost believe.

CHAPTER XXVIII

PRUSSIAN JUSTICE

WANDA'S birthday, the 16th of June, came and went—marked only by a great fight in the trenches. Once more we were all keyed up to the thought of release; even I felt the moment had come. In vain our hopes! But still we thought before long the Russians would surely get in.

I pushed my calendar along to the 26th of June —our wedding day. Surely that would not go by without some news of each other—but it did! Also the 28th of June was the birthday of the twins. All went by. Gustav tried to celebrate the events for us, bringing little gifts for Wanda, and for me an unheard-of luxury—a piece of cheese! On the boys' birthday our kind doctor friend sent them a cake.

The heat came, heavy, oppressive. People died like flies. Dysentery raged. The road past our

house, that road which led to East Prussia, led also to the cemetery—little no longer—no longer peaceful. There was one constant stream of peasant funerals, with now and then a more pretentious one with the priest. It was a common sight to see people carrying a rough box, with a bit of green upon it, or all wrapped up in a shawl, singing the song for the dead as they slowly and painfully went on their way. The wail of those voices still rings in my ears—supremely melancholy and hopeless. Hopeless for themselves—for the dead were rather to be envied. War had taken the sting away! Often I saw them resting by the roadside, saying prayers for the dead that the time be not lost, then going on till they reached the cemetery—where they must dig the grave. Hours after those people had passed on their way to the cemetery we would see them returning, the cross-bearer going on before. That cross! Often it was only two pieces of wood bound together—there were not enough crosses in the church to serve the increasing number of funerals—and yet there had to be a cross.

The church was the only thing left to the people

—they knelt round about the building in the dust of the street before it—a heart-breaking sight—those poor creatures—never talking much, now grown quite inarticulate. The crucified people! Even the children were still and quiet, and weak. I often wondered what they prayed for,—what the idea back of the telling of their beads was,—and I came to the conclusion they were without thought,—just dumb and numbed with suffering, waiting for death to release them. That same mental attitude was in the air; every one felt so. Grey despair walked and sat with us; we had to fight not to be overpowered. How many there were who tired of the struggle, laying violent hands on their own lives;—daily we heard of someone who had gone in this way.

My enemy, the *Bezirkschef*, found many and various ways to increase the misery of the people. One law posted had the effect of making all men and boys keep off the streets, for they were ordered to salute their conquerors, standing motionless and bareheaded. No one dared sit in the park. Also terrible fines were laid upon the unfortunate one not at home before nine o'clock.

The people who had shops had to pay in assessments more than their stock was worth; and for the slightest reason they were turned out ruthlessly. The wines and brandies which the Germans had permitted various people to buy in Prussia were confiscated, "taken for the hospitals"!

Someone must have spent sleepless nights scheming out the various indignities inflicted upon the town. In a newspaper found on a prisoner just taken was the account of what had happened to a young school-teacher. Someone had escaped from all those who had tried—and carried news to the world beyond—telling a little of what was happening in Suwalki. This young girl had fallen a victim to the German soldiers; under horrible conditions she had taken her life. The Commandant sent for the old priest, the soldier messenger as a joke, I presume, telling him his ministry was needed for the dying. Hurried along the street in his robes the priest was astonished to find that it was only to the Commandant he was led. The Commandant told him there was no dying to minister to, only a paper to sign for the living—denying the case of the school-teacher. The priest

told him it was true,—terribly true and did occur just as stated in the paper. The Commandant asked him if he were there; whether he saw the soldiers himself.

"No."

"Then you will either sign this paper or the church will be closed and you with the other priests sent to prison in Prussia."

The old priest, grown to be a saint of God, working and praying day and night to lessen the burden put upon his people, knowing what the Church meant to them, dared not bring this new misfortune upon them, and signed the iniquitous paper. I spoke to him once about it, trying to comfort him—telling him he could not help it. The suffering of the man was great; he felt he had been called upon to be a martyr and had failed. He had testified to the truth of untruth, forced so to do because of the dire calamity threatened.

The case of one of the Russian doctors was almost identical. This doctor, being a Pole, was detailed under escort to attend the sick in the town. In a hut beside the road leading to East Prussia lived a peasant and his wife. Beyond

taking their food, horse and cow, and making the man dig in the trenches nothing had happened. A child was born and the Russian military doctor was sent to attend the case, the woman being in a bad state. She recovered, however, and the child was three weeks old—when the soldiers had their license to celebrate a victory. . . . The hut lay close to the road. When the husband came home—he hanged himself, with the tiny baby dangling beside him. . . . The Russian doctor, who was a Pole, found all three when he came to see how his patient was. Overcome with horror and indignation he reported the case, saying it was a disgrace to the German army, and demanded punishment! Someone did get punished. The doctor! He received what they called "black arrest" and a two years' sentence at hard work in a prison, for criticizing the soldiers of the Kaiser!

After that the Russians were not permitted to visit the sick; instead the townspeople were forced to either pay five marks a visit or go without, which of course they did. Went without! Until another greater epidemic arose, then the people were driven like cattle to be inoculated for cholera.

CHAPTER XXIX

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

THE 15th of July we were told prisoners were to get ten pfennigs a day, and a piece of bread! For the first time in all those weary months the fact that the captive soldiers were men was taken into consideration, and the burden of feeding them and being forced to look upon them taken from the townspeople.

Most of the prisoners were transferred to Prussia. We hoped it was better there. I was very glad when the news came of rations for the men—but as always my joy was short-lived—for the permission to feed them was taken from me. To feed a prisoner was a misdemeanour, to be punished by a fine and imprisonment. With ten pfennigs a day and a little chunk of hard bread, the men would not be better off, but worse—I knew how it would be; at the tiniest offence rations would be cut off.

Gustav still helped us along, but I dared not buy so much as at first, the store people only giving certain things and not over a stated amount. Once more food grew scarce in the town. I was more fortunate than any one else, but from day to day I wondered if on the next we should have proper food.

As people in the town were feeling the pinch of hunger I felt called upon to share what we had. The men, Pan W. and the engineer, came very often for dinner. We ate silently except for the children; sensitive little things, they also were more silent than before the war. One person I always sent food to was the aunt of an acquaintance of ours, a judge. The poor lady had decided to stop when the town was evacuated, thinking the Russians would soon be back. She had plenty of funds, and should have been comfortable. The very first day of the Prussian occupation the house was looted and occupied by the common soldiers. They took her maid, who was the only creature left her after the evacuation, and through fear of what was going on about her the poor lady had a stroke of paralysis. Alone and helpless, how sad was her case. I wished to take her to my house

where she would not be alone, but of course was not allowed to do so.

Gustav told me to stop letting the two men come to meals. The engineer was the pet suspect of the *Bezirkschef*. Our friend, the man in whose house the meeting for the organization of the typhus hospital had taken place, was in prison. He had been pulled out of bed in the middle of the night and carried away. Gustav brought a piece of sausage to me one day—about it was wrapped a piece of paper—"The order of the day" from the Commandanture. I naturally looked through it with interest. A long list of things confiscated and people punished. Z—ski, sentenced to five years' imprisonment at hard labour. I was so overcome by the news that it was difficult to keep calm. I sent my cook to get what news she could of the poor man. She came back with the information that he had returned to his house—that the case was finished! Thinking the matter over carefully, I decided to run the risk of going to our friend Z—ski, telling him what I had read. My cook, after hearing my plan, grew almost hysterical. About five o'clock I went on my

errand, walking through the sultry streets, looking neither to the right nor the left. It was hot, and the air heavy with the odours of war; the misery of the time dragged like a leaden weight upon mind and feet.

When I got to Z—ski's house where a soldier was on guard, I found him sitting before a table with vacant eyes—staring into space. He recognized me finally, and almost a smile came to his lips. He asked me how the children were, poor man! Somewhere he had three children and a very pretty wife. His old servant was fussing about, and begged me to persuade her master to take a hot bath which she had prepared for him. Getting rid of her I asked him what he had been told when released!

"Nothing."

I asked him if he knew a soldier was on guard?

Also "No."

I had to tell him what I had learned, begging him if there were any message for his wife to give it to me—also telling him to keep quiet and think of all he wished to tell me.

He struggled bravely, saying it could not be

true—he had done nothing wrong—as if that were necessary! He had only given money to the officers taken prisoners. He could not believe the information was correct.

I begged him to realize his position—lest the enemy take him unawares. He started to write to his wife—stopped and tore it up.

"You tell my wife! Tell her I loved her, and now shall never see her again. My sons must understand the fate of their father—they are—Poles." He spoke like a man drowning—gasping for air. I thought he would die before my eyes, wondering idly if I should do wrong not to aid him, thinking of the blessed relief death would mean.

Suddenly he told me there was something he wished to give me—that the Germans should not get it,—money, taking from a hiding-place a great pile of bills! As he was counting it a soldier on guard came in asking what we were doing. I told him quite simply the gentleman was lending me some money as my funds were running low—showing him—he left us, satisfied—and I found that there were 1500 roubles and three thousand marks, putting the money into my bag. We

spoke together with difficulty. I noticed how his eyes travelled from one object to another—staring but unseeing. After awhile he told me not to worry too much about him—his heart was weak, the end would come soon—sooner than the war would end, or the Russians retake Suwalki!

I looked at him wondering if that wife of his—somewhere—would recognize her husband in the white and broken old man before me. I remembered the first time I ever saw them both, at a ball in Suwalki less than two years before, she pretty, gay, exquisitely dressed. He gallant, with hair black as night—with the "grand manner" of the Polish noble. I had admired his wonderful dancing of the *mazur*.

Presently I told him we would eventually succeed in getting out. My faith had not wavered, else the days would have been impossible to live through. Some day I would deliver both messages and money to his wife which in the meantime I was glad to have. We clasped hands, gazing silently at each other. The next morning he was taken into East Prussia, and I was told to keep strictly at home.

CHAPTER XXX

IN THE RUSSIAN HOSPITAL

MANY people in the town were punished for the same reason Z—ski was. Four Russian officers and two soldiers had attempted to escape! We found out when the fines and imprisonments were generously passed around! The soldiers were shot down, and one of the officers was caught; but three either reached their own lines, or were killed in the woods. One of them had been betrothed to a girl in Suwalki. She knew nothing of the plan, but that did not matter. Twice led out to face the firing squad—threatened—the girl was finally thrown into prison; then sentenced to ten years at hard labour. With her, various young people were also sentenced, her acquaintances getting from two to five years each. One brave little woman, a teacher of her native language, French, defied all orders, going about to gather a

little money for those who had to start for their Prussian prison. They who had so little themselves were always ready to help the still more unfortunate.

How many from just our small town of Suwalki are wearing their hearts out in Prussian prisons—people who have done absolutely nothing, unless to be Polish, and to be alive, is a crime.

The Russian hospital was given a new surgeon-in-chief, the doctor who had operated upon my little boy's finger. He, the incarnation of *Schrecklichkeit*, too hard and cruel to be longer tolerated in the German hospital, was given charge over the Russians. Could worse misery come upon the defenceless men? When I learned this, there were a number of officers sitting about my table drinking coffee. They told it as a good joke that this brutal man had been appointed, laughing uproariously that his first demand had been for a larger *Leichen Halle* (morgue). Congratulating each other upon the fact that there would soon be fewer prisoners.

Not long after this new chief was set over them, a Polish lady came to see me, showing me the

marks of his hand upon her face. Serving as a nurse some especial piece of brutality had been too much for her. She spoke! with the result the doctor struck her violently across the face, knocking her down. This same lady told how she had used the expression "Pray God the war will soon be over." The surgeon-in-chief said she was praying on the wrong side; her prayers could not be answered!

Another doctor, a Herr Professor, was about as bad. A wounded officer needed an immediate operation—the amputation of a leg. The Herr Professor called upon refused to operate without a fee of two hundred marks. The officer had no money, or very little, and by the time the other officers and sisters in the lazarette had signed a promissory note, gangrene had claimed its own! It was too late—the officer died.

One day two ladies came to me to help them get food for the wounded once more. There was so much typhus and no milk, nor, in fact, anything except pea-soup. We were forbidden to help, but thought there were ways of getting around the difficulty. I gave them twenty-five roubles and a

quantity of pudding-powder, which they carefully concealed. They had no sooner gone than my cook told me an officer who spoke Polish had questioned her—asked her what the ladies wished. My cook was clever enough to say she did not know; but hastened to tell me of the circumstances. Of course I sent her instantly to warn the ladies that they were watched—and that time the *Bezirkschef* did not catch any one!

I kept very quiet, hoping against hope for some change, but no answer came to my petition, and I knew as long as my enemy was at the head there was no possibility of release. Bad news came to us from the world. We heard the Russians were in retreat; but about us the fight was still going on. Once more the Great Man was there, directing the line of defence. I was told by an officer the orders were to take Kalvarya at all costs. The Russians had a battery of guns on top of the little hill, and the Germans could not get by. This was a point just beyond Suwalki. Tremendous reinforcements arrived, among them the "Black Bavarians," they who, it is said, never delivered prisoners given into their charge. "The prisoners

got tired," they would say. And regiment after regiment tried to storm the hill. Why the senseless waste of human life, no one knew. It was the high order! An officer, telling me of the dreadful slaughter, said the swamps about Kalvarya were as thick with dead as a Christmas cake with currants—and, after all, they did not get the Russians, for they withdrew!

CHAPTER XXXI

THE PRUSSIAN TREATMENT OF THEIR OWN

It was not only the captives who suffered. I have seen many a German soldier beaten, knocked about! They were all around us—one had to observe! I used to be sorry for the men in the hospital, the rules were so rigid, the sisters' duties seeming to consist in scrubbing the floors rather than in making life a little easier for the wounded men. A Pole, from Posen, among them, once begged me for a book to read. Others heard of it, and more books were demanded. I still had various bookcases, aside from those the chickens roosted upon in the library. It got to be a habit that the wounded soldiers, our enemies, came to look through my books. They often would sit down, longing, as always, to talk, inevitably showing me some photograph of wife and child or sweetheart, each one speaking longingly of the end of the war.

At rare intervals I visited the hospital. Once from my balcony I witnessed the following. The chief of the hospital in our house came along, reading a paper; he called an orderly to give the order that all patients who could walk be mustered in front of the hospital. This was done, the men, in their grey and white striped garments, hobbling out. The chief then told them he was ordered to send every man who was sufficiently recovered to wear a uniform to report for duty. Among the men was one who had no wound apparently, only his neck was bound up. Spoken to, his voice could not be heard in reply. The surgeon-in-chief asked him why he spoke so. The poor fellow struggled to speak louder. The chief raised his hand, striking the voiceless man upon the mouth, knocking him flat on the ground. After he had picked himself up, the chief once more told him to speak. This time the voice had quite gone, and the soldier was let go, with the remark: "Now I believe you cannot speak!"

So many men were killed at the taking of Kalvarya that even the sanitary orderlies from the hospitals were called for duty in the trenches. One

in the hospital under my roof was a young violinist. I had often spoken with him, and he brought candles to me whenever he could. His career was just beginning when the war broke out. Not yet in the army, he volunteered for the sanitary service; very nervous, sensitive, it struck terror to his soul when called out for the trenches; and he drank essence of vinegar to make himself ill. Somehow or other it was found out, or, at least, suspected. The boy was disgraced and beaten. Really ill, after the questioning he was put to bed in a room directly under my bedroom. Feeling death near, finally a confession was wrung from him; after that all were forbidden to go near him, even to give a drink of water. Shut in by himself in that big room, his voice echoed weirdly, begging, pleading for mercy, for a drink of water. One of the German sisters got hysterical at the sound, and I thought she would also be beaten. Two days and nights we heard him, moaning, whimpering, sometimes screaming horribly. I tried to console myself with the thought that he was delirious. Quieted at last by the death he had prayed for, we saw how the body was brought out, clothed

only in a shirt, thrown on a peasant's wagon, dragged by two Russian soldiers. The German soldiers were ordered out to see how a traitor was served. After a long harangue, the Russians, under the care of a German soldier, started for the place of burial.

Thinking is seemingly forbidden to the German soldier. The utmost severity controls. Only at intervals they are given license and as much as they wish to drink, and encouraged to do the most terrible things. That is why the people in occupied territory have so hard a lot. The curious part of it is, they always wish to be praised. They will take your furniture, pack it up, and expect you to stand entranced with their "chic" way of doing it. Nothing is so hard to bear as the scorn with which people not Germans are regarded. Nothing is sacred! I was surprised at the German priest imitating the singing of peasants and priest, holding them up to ridicule, singing mockingly the words supposed to be so sacred.

One day this German priest was holding a service for the soldiers in the trenches, near Wigry, when the Russians began to drop grenades on them!

There was a scattering to the four winds of his congregation! For the remarkable bravery displayed in not letting a piece of shell strike him, this priest received the Iron Cross! And, of course, he came to celebrate the occasion in my house!

CHAPTER XXXII

AFTER THE FALL OF WARSAW

We constantly heard rumours of the triumph of the German armies. One afternoon the bells began their horrible din! And we knew a new misfortune was heaped upon the head of poor Poland. The day was hot and breathless, the smell of war sickening, overpowering. How glad I was the windows were shaded from the fierce rays of the sun. They could not say I closed the blinds at the sound of German victory, inflicting a fine upon me. The children were in the garden with my cook and Gustav. I wished they were at home; the sound of the bells was so difficult to bear alone. Looking out behind the curtain, I saw Pan W., the Polish nobleman, who was slightly deformed, coming towards my door. Quickly going down the stairs to let him in, we met without a word. His face was enough. I knew before he

spoke that Warsaw had fallen—Warsaw, where his wife and young daughters were.

We went upstairs together. He threw himself down in a chair, burying his face in his hands, a pitiful figure. The bells kept up their clamour as if they never intended to leave us in quiet again. After a long time, my visitor raised his head. "If the bells would only stop ringing! Oh, Warszawa, Warszawa." He spoke as if the words strangled him, bursting into sobs which shook his whole body—and I was glad, knowing the relief that tears would bring to him. We, the unfortunate ones, did not need to hide our feelings from each other.

After awhile the children came in. Gustav, with the delicacy denied most of his superiors, went off without a word. Wanda, with the unerring instinct of childhood, went to sit upon my visitor's knee, asking him why he cried. "Because I have two little girls, and do not know where they are," he told her. The children had made him put aside the thought of Warsaw for a moment, and we talked of my prospects of getting away.

When the armies were withdrawn from Suwalki,

the people would starve, surely. Black days were coming. The next day I went to see the "Presidial Rat" once more. He told me my papers had been examined by the "Head Command" of the army, but there was small chance of the permission requested being given. They thought I had seen, and knew, too much; my sympathies were too outspoken. Also, there must be certificates telling the reason of my remaining in Suwalki—that my children really had been ill of typhus at the time. It should have been easy to get such a statement, only I had to beg that brutal man, the present surgeon-in-chief of the Russian hospital, to give it me. I instantly wrote a note to him, asking him to call; and Gustav delivered it. This time, being less busy, he came quickly. I told him quite frankly what was necessary, and why; and also, that for the time spent in helping me I would pay at the rate of small operations. He said he wanted fifty marks—in advance! I gave it him, and he went off, telling me he would do all in his power to aid me, even to calling upon the *Bezirkschef*. Before he went, he told me of a few bits of furniture of mine he would like, really

choice things, which I had kept close about me. Anything to keep him on my side! What mattered a little furniture now! Three days after he returned in quite a different mood! Some of the various diplomatic notes had been exchanged with America, about the submarines, and the Germans were furious! He told me he had written the certificate, but it would do no good; I would never get out, and might thank my own country for it. America was holding a knife to Germany's throat, etc.! He called us all sorts of names, and included the whole Anglo-Saxon race.

I listened with calmness to his frenzy, for I would rather have his blame than his praise.

There were fewer prisoners now, less for me to do, and for a day or two I allowed myself to be ill and went to bed. It only made things worse for the children; besides, if I really gave in, it was the end of us! I must make the most tremendous effort of all just now. So, once more the burden was shouldered.

News came to us continually of some new triumph for the Germans; the bells clanged it into our ears. I think that for every bridge or hut they

took the bells were rung! The nights were dark with the early darkness of the North. We had no light. It was cold and wretched, and there was no fuel. We saw daily the great loads of trees from our forests cut down and made into logs, carted into East Prussia, often with loads of furniture. I do not know where it came from. No more was in the houses, unless the officers had been using it. There was a tremendous search for metals, the peasants hiding what they might have in the earth rather than give it up for bullets to shoot their own men down with. When we heard such a search was to take place, which meant that all handles, knobs on doors and furniture, window fastenings—everything which could be considered metal—would be collected, I feared my papers might be discovered. It was a possibility some officer might decide to take my bedroom furniture for himself! Through a peasant woman, devoted to the family, I got my papers away, and buried deep down in the earth, in two iron pots, one turned inside the other as a cover, all bound up in a mackintosh. They were buried under the place where the pigs used to root. The pigs were no

more, but the pig pen yet stood. There our papers still rest, waiting for Suwalki to be taken once more. I believe that Suwalki will again be ours and that we shall recover our documents.

CHAPTER XXXIII

PROCLAMATIONS!

NOTICES were posted by the commandant regarding the harvests—"That any one touching or using any grain, potatoes, or vegetables from his own gardens or fields, would be punished to the full extent of the law—military law!" It was further stated that all crops would be gathered under military supervision.

I think tears of blood fell from the eyes of the people when they were told of this. It seemed just the last straw. After the long hot summer, hungry, but working with the feeling that at least something would be in store for the winter—to have it all taken away! Especially, were they amazed to find how cleverly they had been compelled to buy back their own grain, paying twenty-five marks a measure,—to plant the crops which were now taken away. I remember one old peasant

who came to me, puzzling over this fact—"Are there no gentlemen in Prussia, to deceive poor people so?" he asked. Then, with true peasant philosophy, shrugging his shoulders, "If they do take my little crop, it will do them more harm than they do me. God does not forget." They did take the crops, to the last bean and potato.

Few could rise to the philosophy of that one old man. All had gone a step farther on the road to obliteration,—and many hanged themselves, putting an end to their sufferings.

Not long afterwards there was another proclamation—this time about dogs, also signed by the commander of the army. Ten marks to pay for the keeping of a dog! Most had by this time disappeared. I had chloroformed many; it was so wretched to see the creatures going about hungry, and to feed dogs when so many starving human beings were about, was impossible. The dogs remaining were the especial pets, companions in misery, like our little Dash. The two little puppies, Dash's babies, had been taken by officers. The children cried their eyes out about losing them but Dash we clung to! I paid the tax to keep

our true friend, but few others in the town could. The animals taken were not tenderly put to death. I was told about it with horrid details by a soldier, who was indignant over the whole thing; but he was a Pole, and could not enter into such amusements.

One more notice posted was about people to work in East Prussia; all able-bodied individuals had to report. As they did not do so, the soldiers were sent to take them from the houses. *With great difficulty*, I begged my cook off, even going so far as to request permission to keep her, from the police.

It was a cruel sight to see those sorry bands of people—not only peasants—driven through the town to the station on the way to East Prussia. Families which up to that time had clung together, were now mercilessly torn asunder. A man, escaping by offering to point out some spot where houses had stood before the war, drove back from East Prussia, and from him I heard what was happening to our people. The women and girls were housed, the men sleeping on the ground at a distance. What happened I cannot tell—but

that man, speaking slowly, mournfully, told me how the night was often torn with the screams of the women. Their huts also lay close to the road which led into East Prussia—far, far in—and the men were not allowed to go to the defence of their own women, to protect them from the troops marching, always marching, into Poland.

After the fall of Warsaw, we knew the Germans were trying to trap the Russians near Suwalki. Great numbers of troops once more were about us. We heard of the Russian retreat. At least, they were not caught by the German "Nippers"! One day we heard Sejny was taken, and after that, every day we were told of new gains. The military merely passed through Suwalki now; food grew alarmingly scarce, and the town was so quiet. After the continuous battles all those months, we felt the stillness even more oppressive and hopeless.

Gustav came to tell me the day after the fall of Kovno, that all the men stationed in Suwalki were to be moved on. We had lost our military significance! My enemy, the *Bezirkschef*, had been detailed to crush the people in some Cour-

landish county taken by the Germans. Poor people! they had my sympathy, but we were glad to get rid of him! Nothing else could be quite so bad!

I was sorry to lose Gustav, who wept bitterly at parting from us—wondering who would help me over the bad spots.

Many officers came to say good-bye to us, among them the surgeon-in-chief of the Russian hospital! Loss of military significance had some benefits! He wished to be nice—to speak to the children, but they would have none of it. He even looked at Wladek's finger, pronouncing it good, and only a tiny "fault in his beauty!" He advised me to settle down without further thought of escape. I often wonder if that man has been permitted to live, going further on his merciless way.

As soon as the troops left, we began to feel the pinch of necessity. Everything was taken—there was often nothing to buy, except rum. That there was in plenty! One Jewess actually came to me to beg help in getting a permit to open a tavern. I told her "No, but I would ask for permission to close it!" It did not help much. She got her

license, as did many others also. Drunkenness was part of the daily life of the town. With no food, and only the soup in small portions served the town by our committee, the pennies could buy a temporary relief and forgetfulness. Thus was the crowning injustice put upon the people; they were debauched.

A few days of bad food, and all of my children fell ill with dysentery. Of course they could not eat black bread after typhus. The doctor who had been always our kind friend came to see us. He was soon to go, also. He used the cholera serum on the children, and for a few days the poor little things were very ill. Wanda and Wladek recovered in a degree, but Staś grew worse. I was once more fighting death for my boy. Oh the misery of those days! It comes over me in a flood only to think of it. Night and day—night and day—always the same. The child grew transparent from the constant lose of blood, just a little moaning atom!

Something broke down in me those days. I had come to the point where I knew if we were not released it meant giving up my children; and now I

wished to give them up rather than see them suffer. Perhaps that was just why I had failed. I had clung to them so desperately, calling on them not to leave me. They had been left to me, but now I was willing to leave the decision to the Higher Power, not forcing things my way. Looking Death in the eyes, one loses the fear of Him.

Our kind friend, after giving Staś the third hyperdermic injection of cholera serum, pronounced the verdict of life for him—if we could get away! As he stood looking at my boy, he said, "You have got to be let go. It is inhuman to keep you longer. Try once more for permission to go to Berlin. You have your Ambassador there." I told him there was as yet no reply to my last petition. It had been promised soon.

Staś lived and on my birthday, the 28th of August, the kind doctor was sent on, away from Suwalki! He came to say good-bye, the two children hanging on him; they loved him. To me, he wears a halo! How much he had done to lighten the burdens, not only for me, but for the whole town! While he was there, saying good-bye to us, a soldier came with the final refusal of my

petition. It was a hard blow, but I just *would not accept its finality.* If God saved my boy's life the second time, when I was ready to give him up, it surely meant that we were to be released! Then and there I once more went to the Civil Government. The "Presidial Rat" was surprised at my persistency; he felt there was no use in it; but he finally consented to send another petition, this time asking permission to travel to Berlin, there to enquire if it were possible to go to America. In the office was a wonderfully kind man, a lieutenant, who told me this time he would help me. Surely we would be freed. A day which seemed to be all darkness was turning bright. I went back to my boy with a little hope for the future. He was so weak as hardly to breathe. I had a bottle of red wine, and fed him a drop at a time. Perhaps before he needed food we should be on our way!

CHAPTER XXXIV

RELEASE!

THE days went by, full of cares, for the three children were difficult to provide for; but God had raised up a new friend—the lieutenant! a gentleman, kind and tender-hearted. When I asked for a doctor at the *Magistrat*, he sent one, and food for the children, too—*a whole half loaf of greyish white bread!* I was all packed. I think my cook and other people, also, thought I was mad, that my brain had been turned with the uncertainty as to the whereabouts of my husband, and the horrors we had lived through. The old priest came to talk to me, persuaded by what he heard of my preparations, that all was not right. I told him I was "sure, sure, sure of release—nothing could hold us." He shook his head, saying I was "either mad or a saint with a vision."

I was neither, only a mother, determined to rescue her children.

Once more Staš was a little worse, and that day a portion of our food was not sent to the paralysed lady. It had daily been carried, and the omission was an oversight with which I had little to do. That, however, did not lessen my condemnation when the next morning a soldier handed me a note, saying it had been found beside the dead body of the lady who wrote it. The pity of those few lines, saying she "had heard I really was leaving; and, after living through one day without a friend, had decided to end all. Every one in the town was as badly off as she was—there was no hope. God knew the weight of sorrow and misery laid upon Poland, and would forgive her. Purgatory had been upon the earth. She had no fear of what was to come." With loving wishes of better days for us, and greetings and blessings for the townspeople, she had signed herself grandly, as in the old days. The soldier told me someone going to see her had found her hanging in the wardrobe.

I was heart-broken; after all those months, to

have forgotten. My cook grew hysterical when she heard of it, saying the two children had eaten an egg apiece, as I was too busy and troubled over Stas to eat, she had followed my example. As she put it, "The food had been saved for the next day." For the poor paralysed woman there was no next day.

The days went by until the 6th of September. At the end of a grey day, when my courage had snapped off, a soldier came to me with the order to instantly report at the city offices. It did not take long for me to dress! Walking through the town in the early dusk, the place struck a chill. It was full of the living dead. Though dark and cold, no smoke curled from the chimneys, no lights shone from the windows. One more night of darkness to be lived through.

Arriving at the offices, I was received with great ceremony, conducted instantly to the "Herr Presidial Rat," who greeted me impressively, saying, "I have your permission to travel to Berlin. There you can see for yourself if you can get further permission to travel to America! I cannot understand why the permission was given *now*

after so many refusals." I told him "because it had to!" Then, asking how soon we could leave, he told me as soon as I was ready! What glorious news; to be allowed to get on a train and travel to freedom! After telling me that a man would come to take our photographs the next morning and prepare various papers, I said "good-evening."

It was a different woman went down those stairs! I wanted to sing and dance! Out on the streets I was glad it was dark. My joy almost shamed me.... Reaching home, when my cook met me I laid hold of her, forcing her to dance, most protestingly, calling on all the saints! The children were astonished, but willing to be glad, as mammy was! Little Staś calling out from his crib, in a tiny, weak voice, "It is good mammy is glad."

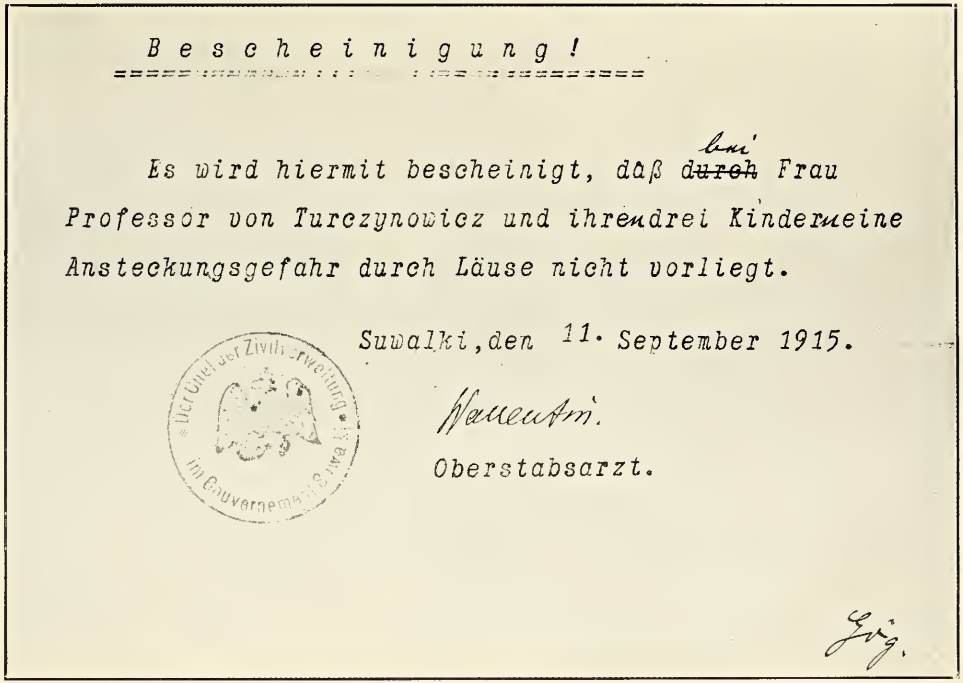
My cook thought I was mad—that the end had come. When she finally understood we were really going, she sat upon the floor with her apron over her head, crying, howling! That made me cry, too, and, of course, then the children joined in—the very thing to bring me to my senses! I fed them soberly, bathed them, and put them to bed, for children must be put to bed, whatever happens.

The next day a soldier came to photograph us, and the kind lieutenant also came—to congratulate me, and to give me advice about various things, telling me while on the journey to speak "neither Polish nor English, only German." I asked him, "What about the children!" "The children must understand the danger. They know how to speak German."

I was to have three papers aside from my passport. One given me as a much appreciated kindness, addressed to the German Red Cross, recommending "Sister Laura von Turczynowicz, a member of the Polish Red Cross, and chief committee in Warsaw, to their care; that they should help me in any way needed."

The second paper testified that we all had typhus in February and March. The third, a literal translation—"This is to certify by Frau Professor Laura von Turczynowicz and her three children is no danger of carrying lice." Yes, there was the odious word, signed by the official physician. Oh, it might have been worse. They might have sent us to be disinfected!

There would be no train until the following



B e s c h e i n i g u n g !

Es wird hiermit bescheinigt, daß ~~durch~~ bei Frau Professor von Turczynowicz und ihren drei Kindern eine Ansteckungsgefahr durch Läuse nicht vorliegt.

Suwalki, den 11. September 1915.

Der Chef der Zivilverwaltung im Gouvernement Suwalki

Wallentin.

Oberstabsarzt.

Gög.

A Curious "Sanitary Passport" Issued to the Author by the Germans

Sunday, the 12th, for troops were being drawn out of Poland and sent to the West Front. A long wait, but better—Staś was too weak to travel. I would have to carry him, for no nurse was allowed me. My cook had to remain—the faithful creature! I had to go alone—not even thinking about it—though before the war we had been surrounded with servants. When the children were naughty we had wondered that their governess had such a bad method with them! Well—I knew now.

The news got out in the town. People came to see me. It made one feel so selfish. One day the official doctor suggested that we should take a little drive! to get Staś once in the air before the journey. A *doroszka* which had been driven to Grodno in the time of evacuation stood in its old place. It was curious to get into a vehicle once more. The coachman told me he had seen my husband in Vilno in March. He had driven him from the station. It was my first word! This man told me also the company of children with our governess had arrived in Vilno after an interminable, dangerous journey. He did not know of their whereabouts.

We drove a little way from Suwalki. I wondered why we did not come to the woods of Augustowo—but then understood. The woods were all gone—graves, myriads of graves, instead. I begged the man to turn around; it was too much to bear. The town, in its desolation, was not much better—roofless houses, and windowless—and doorless; no animals, no people, and no children! They were gone—wiped out! It was better to be at home with the door shut. There I made also a pilgrimage to say good-bye to the old house, our palace! Most of it I had not seen in months, and now I am sorry I looked upon it in its desecration.

The old priest came to see me—solemn and full of warnings. Before he left, he understood that for me the risk was no more to go than to stay. He blessed us, sending us on our way, telling me not to forget them when I got out into the world, and to send them help. I promised—a promise yet unfulfilled, because I could not.

The last visitor I had was Pan W. He had much news from Warsaw. A Jew had managed to travel from Warsaw to Suwalki, bringing him news. His wife was in the Russian Red Cross, he

heard, and the daughters safe in the depths of Russia. In Warsaw the conditions were the same as we had. The President of our Central Committee, who called upon the conqueror of the city, instead of being received, was thrown into prison as a hostage.

Pan W. was a little happier, though terribly apprehensive for me. I insisted on giving him a hundred roubles, for I was going out into the world, while he was a poor prisoner! Asking also what else I could do, hearing for the first time that he and his sons slept without pillows or covering. He said in a mild voice, "It was cold and hard." I fell into a perfect fury with the war! Why should we suffer such things? That man and his sons were literally facing cold and starvation. How long would a hundred roubles last?

CHAPTER XXXV

THE JOURNEY

THE 12th of September we started on our journey! Just one year before we had arrived in Vilno, after the first evacuation of Suwalki. Well I did not know then what was waiting for me, to be lived through, moment by moment.

That night I did not go to bed, but sat talking with my true and tried friend, the cook. Even then she tried to make me change my mind, being sure the Germans would do such frightful things to us. We were all ready and waiting, when a soldier came at seven to fetch us. I hardly glanced at our old house, now almost bare of furniture—it meant nothing for me, only suffering! We got into a carriage, belonging to the Red Cross, and started. The last vision was my piano in the garden—the leg broken off, sagging at one side, the seams burst open, white from the rain and the sun.

I was glad no one was there to see us go—it would only make them feel their own lot more.

That drive to the station through the grey September mists, cold and uncomfortable, is one not easily forgotten. We found the station surrounded by troops who were to travel by the same train. A few of them crowded about, trying to speak to the children. I was no longer in uniform, and perhaps they thought we were not Polish! The lieutenant was there, presenting the captain who was to have charge of us to Margrabowa. I spoke once more to my cook, telling her to be careful of her money, that no one find it. Also to deliver the money I had left for the Russian hospital; not much, but enough to buy a week's milk. I saw my boxes—three—were with us, and at last knew I was on the road. No one intended to hold us back! The little dog Dash seemed to know something was happening. I told the cook where a bottle of ether stood—and how to use it if there came a time when there was no food for Dash.

The officer in charge told my cook to go—it was time—and I was all alone with my three children,

going into a hostile country. As the train steamed out, the children caught sight of Pan W., gallantly waving his hat to speed us on our way—I wish I knew if he lived through the winter.

Over the despoiled country we went; no forests and no houses—everywhere prisoners were working. The captain who had us in charge was so tired he could hardly speak. Six weeks he had been on the move, with his men. I had noticed the men,—grey, young-old—with lined and wearied faces.

Finally reaching Margrabowa, East Prussia, we were taken from the military train to the station, for the papers had to be examined. In the station, we were huddled up in a corner; there was not even a chair to sit upon, though I held Staś in my arms —the other little children clung to me, for they were frightened. We waited and waited, gazed at curiously by a lot of quite common people gathered there—mostly women and girls in their "Sunday clothes"—waiting for the sanitary trains to bring the wounded. The children got restless, their little legs ached. I whispered to them to sit on the floor. After a while, almost dropping with

(Eigenhändige Unterschrift unter der Photographie.)

Laura von Turczynowicz

Es wird hiermit amtlich bescheinigt, daß der Paßinhaber tatsächlich die durch die Photographie dargestellte Person ist und die vorstehende Unterschrift eigenhändig vollzogen hat.

Suwalki, den 7 September 1915.

Zivilverwaltung Etappen-Inspektion 10.

Chef der Zivilverwaltung

Oberpräsidialrat.

Der Chef der Zivilverwaltung im Gouvernement Suwalki

Nr. ~~des~~ 14 des Registers.

Reise-Paß

für ~~den~~ Frau Professor Laura von Turczynowicz

aus Suwalki

Ausp. Bentheim 15. Sep. 1915

Facsimile of the German Passport Issued to the Author

fatigue myself, the children began to cry, to beg to go. I forgot, and said, "Hush dearies! the train is soon coming—be patient!" Some women back of us screamed "Engländerin" at me. I faced them saying, "No—Americanerin." "Alles gleich" (All the same). They began to throw things at us, to spit upon us. I gathered my children in front of me, covering them with my skirts—praying for the officer to come. He did come, after a century, it seemed to me, pushing our tormentors aside. "Take us quickly, Herr Offizier. I prefer your soldiers to your women!" When we got into the train I had to scrub off my coat and skirt.

A long day in the train, the children were miserable, a little hungry and thirsty. Staś was very weak. In the evening we reached Insterburg, there to change cars. We got a comfortable coupé, but were soon made to give it up, for a man fancied it. I was forced to yield, though holding a first class ticket. After an endless night we arrived in Berlin at six o'clock in the morning. At the station there were no porters and no cabs. The place where I had to stop was near by, fortunately, but I almost dropped before reaching it.

To one unaccustomed, it is difficult to carry a child, however light the child may be.

The "Hôtel" was a most awful hole, where the police kept constant watch. A young Russian interned there, the son of a wealthy Petrograd family, was forced to do porter's duty—and glad to do so, rather than be in a camp. We were shown into a room, musty—"shut up to keep the dust out," and after feeding the children—there was milk and eggs and butter—I was forced to leave them to report myself to the police.

Thereupon I started upon a weary round—Police Headquarters and Commandanture. I was told to communicate with my Embassy, and naturally went to the American! There to be told they could do nothing for me; I was a Russian! It was hard, that moment, because I had built upon having someone help me a little, at least. However, there was nothing to do, only go to the Spanish Consulate, as they directed me. There I was received with the utmost kindness — they told me not to worry, my passport would be issued!

Forced continually to notify the police where I

wa , it was difficult to do what was necessary. For instance, I had to go to the steamship office—constantly wondering what was happening to my children in the care of the woman who owned the "Hôtel!" Pitifully glad they were to see Mammy when I returned to them. That night the police captain from the district came to see if I were at home, and look through our things. Easy enough —the trunks had not come.

The next morning the same weary round. But I was told about noon my passport would be given as soon as someone identified me—as an American citizen, before my marriage to a Russian Pole. My heart was in my boots, but a man from the American Consulate knew me. He said he had heard me sing *The Star Spangled Banner* at the American Thanksgiving dinner in Berlin about nine years back—the year before my marriage! It seemed too good to be true! I remembered that dinner, when I had sung to please the American doctor, a good friend, who had been disappointed in his soloist. My teacher, who was there with wife and daughters, persuading me, telling me I had a pretty dress, and could sing! That was to save

us!—*The Star Spangled Banner* means more than a national hymn to me.

I got my passport, the Consul of Holland viséing it. He adjured me not to try to take anything through, not the tiniest paper. It would mean a fortress for me. Also asking me how I had been treated, telling me the consulate was a bit of Holland, therefore I dared to speak. I told him I was afraid—that the very walls had ears in Berlin. Once more I had to report at the Commandanture, where I was treated with extreme severity—questioned sharply—seeing others going through the same—English and Russians treated like dogs. Finally I was told at eight o'clock the next morning my train left for Holland. That night, with all settled, I came back to my babies, at almost nine o'clock, tired enough to drop!

The children wished to talk and play after their supper, and I was glad to have a respite. Staš was better after the change of air. When I started to put the two to bed, Wladek wished to play—he did not know how tired his mammy was, and ran about the room, in and out, between those German beds with their feather mountains! The police

captain opened the door, and I asked him to help me. He did—caught Wladek, talked to him, played a bit so that all the children got interested, and he undressed him, folding up the child's clothes in a neat little pile, while I just sat still and let him do it! He said: "I am very sorry for you, Madame. I have eight children of my own!"

After the children were asleep, I still had to pack, and rip up Wanda's Teddy bear, which contained some very necessary papers and letters. One was from the soldiers I had fed, telling different things, almost childish in its simplicity. A document or two I was thinking to get through, —I destroyed them all, burning them up—once more sewing up Teddy's wound.

That night I did not lie down, haunted by the fear of missing the train. At last it was morning, and train time. We had food for the journey, even ham! Five marks a pound, butter four. A little of each, and bread, and marmalade. The Russian boy came to carry our things, and we spoke a moment together. He told me of the bread riot the day before, where the police had been called out. He could only write a few words to his par-

ents, and always feared what might be done to him.

My bill rather staggered me, thirty marks a day! At last we were on the way. Good-bye to Berlin! I left there a lot of photographs which I never expect to see again, afraid to take them to the boundary. Another long day in the train—most of the time with the curtains down! Just before Bentheim, I saw a party of English and Belgian prisoners working by the roadside. The train stopped, but they did not even look up—emaciated, ragged, without enough life left in them to feel interest in anything about them. I longed to help them, but must not even look as if I would —it was too dangerous for us.

At Bentheim, thanks to my Red Cross certificate, I was taken first. They expected me, of course! We were undressed—every inch of skin examined by a woman who threw our clothes out to the officers on duty. It is humiliating to have one's hair combed for fear something might be written on the scalp. The children got very cross and insulted.

We looked like rag-bags after that examination

—ragged, with the linings torn out of hats, boots, coats. I begged hard to keep the papers shown in Suwalki. They finally consented to send them to the steamer along with my prayer-book. My card plate and seal were also objects of suspicion —but after much discussion, were also sent. The trunks had not arrived, and I was told they likely would not! Asked what they contained, I told them "furs, clothes, and linen"—"Furs and linen are confiscated in occupied territory." My clothes might be recovered after the war was over!

The poor children were so exhausted by the waiting in the station that when we finally got into the train, I hardly recognized that the last point of resistance was overcome—that in a few minutes we would be out of German territory! When we were actually in Holland, I was seized with such a violent fit of trembling, it seemed as if I would drop to pieces; but as usual, and my salvation, the children needed me, and were hungry.

We were free! To breathe free air once more—no longer told what to do and what not. To no longer see prisoners—helpless to help them. To have food—*white bread* for the children. What it

all meant to me! Seven whole months of captivity had made me appreciate freedom. I was still without word from my husband, but now I could send a telegram to Petrograd, letting him know we were alive, though on our way to America—for I had given my word.

CHAPTER XXXVI

FREEDOM!

THEY had told me in Berlin where to stop in Rotterdam, but it was far from my intention to do so—I wanted to be as far as possible from the sight of a German face, or the sound of a German voice. On the train, a gentleman, who was travelling with his three daughters, told me of a quiet hotel near the station. There, in that peaceful spot, with the windows overlooking the canal we had our first rest.

Arriving late at night, it was all I could do to get the children to bed with the help of the chamber maid. Oh! how tired I was, body and soul—my tears would flow—it was impossible to stop them. In the morning how strange it was to wake without that gripping sense of fear—fear of the Death which had been our companion through the

months! My ill boy was so much better that he was able to stand on his feet, and a kindly porter carried him down to breakfast.

When the children saw heaps of rolls and honey they were delighted, Wanda asking me "if they might have as much as they wanted or if it was for tomorrow!" Poor little mites, after all they had gone through, what a delight it was to see them once more eating the food they needed and desired. In Suwalki we often had had enough food, for the time, but we had never known if it would be possible to buy more.

Immediately after breakfast, the porter accompanied us to the Russian Consulate, sitting in the fiacre with the children, and amusing them while I was busy. At last I saw Russians who were free! What a tremendous event that visit was for me! The Consul was most kind and sympathetic, immediately sending a telegram through the Foreign Office at The Hague, to Petrograd, with the information that we were all alive and well, and on our way to America. I gave as our address the Russian Consulate in New York. The Consul thought it would be well to wait in Rotterdam

for an answer, but I felt the necessity of keeping my word to sail on the 18th.

Those three days in Holland were like bits of Heaven for me; the peace,—the quietness! I felt as if I were dreaming, that in no place in the world was such peace. It seemed curious to see everything standing where it should be, and order everywhere. For seven months I had lived without real privacy—there had never been a moment when someone, if he would, could not march in upon us sleeping or waking. After the crushing and grinding of the Prussian war machine, it took a little time to adjust one's thoughts and ideas.

There was one more visit to the Russian Consulate before sailing. This time I was able to think of the troubles of others, not only of our own, and reported the case of the Russian boy in Berlin, thinking thus to let the boy's parents know what was happening—also, of the hard lot of one of the Russian doctors. This doctor was a surgeon-general, captured near Wilkowiszki, just about the time Suwalki was taken. Made to work incessantly, without comfort of any description, the doctor had done his duty by the prisoners

manfully, often raising his voice in protest over some especially glaring piece of brutality. He was terribly worn out and in bad physical condition when the order was issued that all in the town must be inoculated with typhus serum. The doctor, having had typhus, naturally refused. Thereupon, the German surgeon-in-chief of the Russian hospital, the man who had so brutally operated upon my little son's hand, ordered the soldiers to seize and hold him. The Russian begged to be inoculated upon the leg, but it was not permitted, the surgeon-in-chief inoculating him in the breast. After having had such indignity put upon him, his clothes having been torn off by the soldiers holding him during the inoculation, the Russian doctor was tried by court-martial for insubordination, and because he said it was a disgrace to the German army to do such things, sentenced to two years at hard labour.

On the 18th of September, in the evening, we sailed from Rotterdam, leaving Holland, which had literally been a land of milk and honey for us. We had few clothes, for I feared to spend my money before hearing from my husband.

I was put to remarkable straits many times, being forced to wear my Red Cross uniform which had been in the week-end bag we were fortunate enough to bring through. On the steamer I found three photographs, my prayer-book, and the baptismal certificates of my children, sent from Bentheim by the German authorities.

Among the people on the voyage was an American Red Cross Unit returning from Germany. The sisters were so hopelessly pro-German there was small satisfaction in their companionship for me. The doctor from Columbus, Ohio, was not, and was a most kind friend all the long way over. He looked into the state of the children's health, finding all surprisingly well, and a need only for quiet for the nerves and proper food for the body. The doctor helped me over many difficult moments. The nearer we got to America the more alone I felt. I imagined all sorts of things; not a living soul knew where we were, whether we lived or not! The position was not an easy one for the mother of three small, helpless children.

Finally, the long journey was at an end! and on the dock some Germans met me, two women and

a man. How they knew about me and my story has remained a mystery, but they did—offering effusively to help me—recommending an Hôtel, etc.! It struck a chill to my soul, that reception of theirs! That they should follow me, even in the Land of the Free! Perhaps it was a kindness after all, for I did not have time to think,—to contrast what had been and what was! The "Dear American Doctor," as the children called the Red Cross surgeon, had advised me to go to a certain Hôtel for "ladies," and we did so, just as fast as possible. We were a curiosity at that Hôtel! Where no man might come; mostly inhabited by ladies who would have been quite safe wherever they were. We were given a room on what I suppose is their "bomb-proof" floor, for there were many pianos played with varying skill, much singing, and a strong smell of cooking. But, I felt what a criminal thing it was to have three children. They looked at us so severely, and if one of the children made a sound someone knocked on the door. I wished then we were not in such a protected atmosphere. I would willingly have faced a German or two in preference. There had

been a purpose in my direction to that Hôtel, however, for there I found a friend. If the "ladies' Hôtel" had been like others, I should have had a pitcher of ice water brought to my room. As it was, I had to fetch it for myself, taking all three children with me, not daring to leave them alone for fear they would fall out of the window. And there I met a friend! who immediately got someone to help me with my children, that I might be free to go about.

We went all together to see if a cablegram had come for us. None was there, and none came until the 15th of October. How long, endlessly long, that time seemed! I could not adjust myself to life in America. It was such a change! The big buildings, after living in devastated Poland, terrified me—it seemed as if an aeroplane *must* peep over the top of one and drop a bomb on us. The people in their hurrying rush tired me! After a while, when I began to meet people, and find my friends and relatives once more, their indifference was almost more than I could bear. I felt like crying out,—asking them if they realized what was happening over in war-ridden Europe,—begging

them to send help to those with whom I had lived and suffered.

Someone asked me once how much to believe of the newspaper reports—how much to subtract from the sum of all they said! I answered, "Multiply by twenty, then you will have a faint idea of what is happening in Poland!" In Poland, the conqueror is without any restraint and lacks totally mercy or pity. There they fear no one, for none are there to report except those who look through the Prussian glasses. In Belgium, people see and know what is going on—they are not cut off from the world. But who knows of the executions, the imprisonments inflicted upon the Poles? Yet I know it is the daily meat and drink of the *Kultur träger* to punish, punish, punish! To grind the people into the earth—to stamp all semblance of humanity from their faces, so that they tremble at the sound of a Prussian boot. I often think of how the pet dogs were put to death in Suwalki—I have dreamed of it at night—what would hold them back from doing the same to the people? How many women have hung themselves rather than endure their shame. As if all this were not

Stanislaw de Gozdawa Turczynowicz

Inspector-General of Sanitary Engineers

enough, the crowning injustice has been put upon the people; they are sold rum to finish them, lest one should escape! That was the only thing which was cheap when I left there. And the peasants were already sodden and stupefied with the stuff sold them; the privilege of selling, eagerly sought by the Jews, was looked upon as a sure source of revenue by the Germans.

Powerless to help, it is maddening for me to think of all that happens in Poland, for, under the present circumstances, no help is possible, nothing can reach them. Of what use is one tiny crumb of bread when all the crops are taken, the people turned into slaves? The women, those of them who have escaped a worse fate, are compelled to labour for the Prussians—made to wash for them, cook for them—even ladies do not escape! How hard is their lot, their children gone, swept away by disease and hunger. Yet many live on! through the endless grey days, without light, without fuel, in hopeless misery. If a thought of release stirs them, breaking the grey monotony, if some rumour comes to them that the Germans are "getting it," their lot is infinitely more dread-

ful. For their momentary vision of release, how great the price!

In this great, free America, under the protection of the "Star Spangled Banner," which saved our lives in the country of the enemy, I constantly think of those people in Poland—that gallant country, the martyr of the ages! Has she no right for "the pursuit of happiness"? I believe her day is coming! Those who have lived through the terror of Death and devastation shall see their country rise from the ashes of her burned homes. There will be only a great emptiness, with no forests, no homes except the roofless empty ruins, dotted about the country. I doubt if even Warsaw will escape, when the day comes, as it inevitably must, that the *Kultur träger* hurries towards his own borders, there to intrench, lest the destruction they have brought upon others be meted out to them.

As for the Poles, they have the wonderful Slavonic nature; those who live will quickly respond to the best medicine in the world—Hope! Let them only have a chance! In my vision of the future I see them, patiently building, working,

even dancing once more the *mazur!* For they have a wonderful quality as a people.

This is the only thought which helps me to live through these days of war, knowing the near and dear ones of my husband are going through horrors similar to those my children and I suffered, only worse. For his mother and sisters, there in a spot far distant from Suwalki, cannot call upon the "Star Spangled Banner" for protection.

As for us, here in America so blessed of God, we are waiting the end of the war.. Protected and kept through so many dangers and trials, I know we shall be reunited.

The war must end sometime!

We have grown to be very patient, making few demands on life. Few? Ah no! We ask the only things worth having or living for! Peace and health, and to be reunited with those we love!

To be with those we love, to serve those about us, that is all there is in life! Possessions do not matter, we can live without them, but every human being needs Peace—Peace of soul and country.

THE END

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